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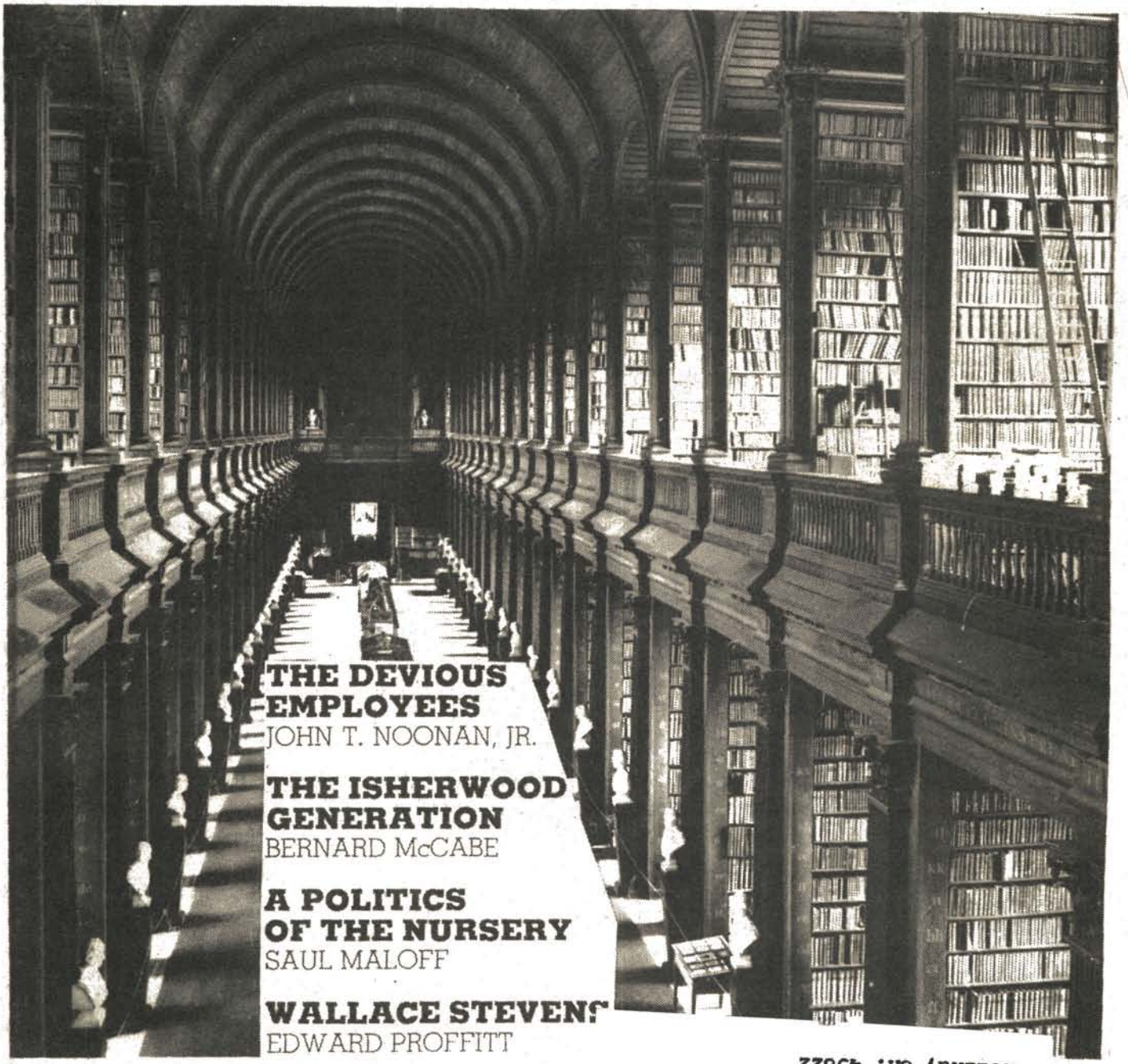

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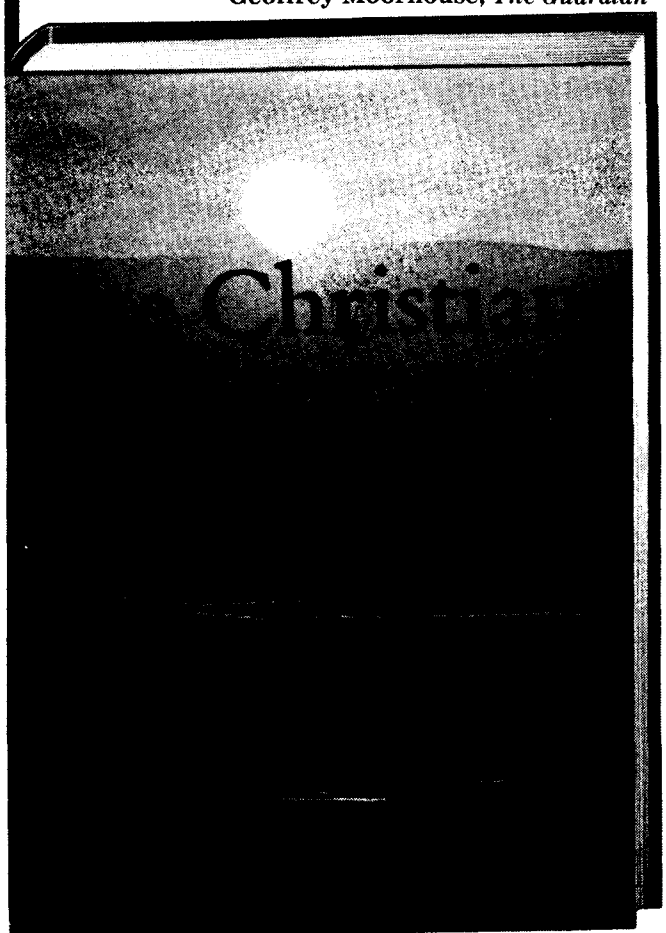

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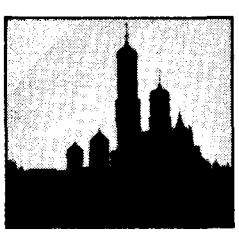

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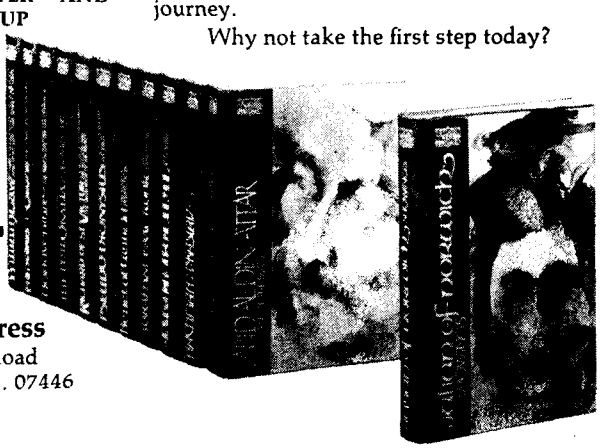

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NEWS & VIEWS

The New Kennedys

The new generation of Kennedys is meeting the press, and the impression is less than overwhelming.

Joseph P. Kennedy, 3rd, sat down with the *Boston Globe*'s Mike Barnicle to discuss the Washington job with the Community Services Administration that he was lucky enough to get when the Massachusetts State Treasurer refused to step down from office so young Joe—that's Robert's son—could step in in '78.

The Washington Job. "It will give me a chance to help out with programs that are aimed at poor people, programs that have really been screwed over the last eight years," said Joe. "I'm going to do some traveling, yeah. I want to go and see and talk to people and find out what's good about the programs, what's bad and what they need from us in Washington. . . . These programs have been ripped off by some local people. I know that. And I know too that they've been screwed by the Nixon Administration."

The money. "About $25,000. That was about the second question I asked."

The mother, Ethel: "She's glad I'm getting off my tail and getting a good job."

A contrasting type is cousin Chris Lawford, Pat's son, who spoke with the *Globe*'s Marian Christy about kin and God while wavering between the Peace Corps and a radio executive trainee job in New York as a stepping stone to politics.

Kin. "Grampa used to say that the name would get me in the front door but from then on it would be my own ball game." Grandma? "She tells me over and over again that public officials have serious responsibility. She insists that I never run for office on the basis of name recognition. She says the fact that I'm a eKnnedy is irrelevant."

God (approached through Dan Berrigan). "I couldn't accept Berrigan's methods. I sat down and talked with him and I saw and understood his terrible anger. But he used illegal tactics. He was fanatical. I couldn't go to jail for him. He demanded 100 percent loyalty. He was dedicated to his ideals. But the ultimate hero for me will always be God."

Fight in France

The new ideological currents in France have Catholic authorities in a sweat about parochial schools, and Gerard Foiret, general secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic Education, has gone on the attack, accusing the French Socialist Party of proposing what he termed "condemnation to death by asphyxiation or annexation" of Catholic schools.

The Socialists have toned down their proposals since last year, but recent statements and the actions of left-wing municipal governments have convinced Catholic officials that the Socialist goal remains the integration of Catholic schools into the state system.

Left-wing municipalities, said Foiret, have "hastened either to suppress grants to Catholic schools, or to threaten them with that step if they refused to change over to a contract of association [which gives the government more control over the schools]."

There are nearly 11,000 private schools in France, the majority of them Catholic. Their existence is guaranteed, and assisted financially, by the Debré Law of 1959. According to Foiret, the French Socialist Party does not plan to abrogate the Debré Law, but to bring Catholic private schools "more prudently and adroitly" under stringent state control through the contract of association. He promises a bitter resistance.

Tip of the Pen

For journalistic directness how about this story on the opening of the fifth world Synod of Bishops in Rome?

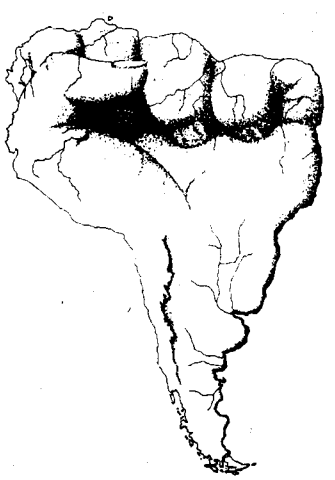
"Perhaps none of the previous four synods called by Pope Paul has aroused less interest around the Catholic world," the story stated. "In the United States, for example, where more than six million Catholic children are said to have no formal religious education, only 49 out of 169 dioceses responded to a Vatican pre-synod questionnaire on religious education."

How come?

"Much of the reaction . . . arises from disillusionment over the synod's strictly consultative function. The synod can pass no laws or issue no decrees. It can write documents and proposals. But enactment of any synod decision depends solely on the Pope. The last synod on evangelization, in fact, was unable to pull together enough momentum to draft final recommendations for Pope Paul."

Nope, that isn't from an *NCR* staffer. It's from an NC News Service piece by NC Rome bureau chief John Muthig.

NC, in case you don't know, is the official news service of the U.S. bishops. Its professionalism has suffered in the past for a lack of this kind of candidness. If Muthig's story signals a new era, we can all say, "*Viva.*"



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Hear, Hear

Daniel Morrissey's *Commonweal* piece on the U.S. bishops' efforts to squelch unofficial "Mom-and-Pop" religious publishing houses ["The Bishops Play Monopoly," 8/19/77] found a friendly ear at one Chancery.

Bishop Norbert Gaughan, Auxiliary of Greensburg, Pa., sided with Morrissey in his column appearing in regional diocesan papers.

"Like Caesar's wife, the Church should be above suspicion," Gaughan wrote. "Does 'official' make it prayer? Does it make it 'official prayer?' By all means let's have official prayer. But not to corner the market, on scriptural or any prayer."

Odds and Ends

—*Kindly Capitalist Society Department.* The National Peach Council has petitioned Washington that older workers who do not want children, and persons who would like to get around religious bans against birth control, be allowed to handle the pesticide DBCP. Washington has banned DBCP because it causes involuntary sterility. Said the Council: "We do believe in safety in the work place, but there can be good as well as bad sides to a situation."

—*Last Word on the '84 Olympics' Site Department.* New York lost out to Los Angeles, partly because M. Donald Grant of the Mets refused to commit Shea Stadium for use for the games, a commitment that would have required the Mets to play in Yankee Stadium for a season, while renovations were made at Shea. Said Grant: "Would you ask the Pope to practice his religion in another church?"

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Empirical Facts

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I'm grateful to Sister Marie Augusta Neal for her gracious review of *The American Catholic: A Social Portrait* [Aug. 19], but would like to express some points of disagreement:

First of all, the reason for omitting Spanish-speaking Catholics from the analysis was essentially technical. The "skewed" distribution of the Spanish-speaking Catholic population is heavily concentrated in a few areas and virtually nonexistent in most other areas. This makes the problem of probability sampling of the Spanish-speaking population especially acute. I simply do not think our data are good enough on the subject of Hispanic Catholics to justify serious estimates. I assume Sister Marie Augusta is willing to concede to NORC the right to decide that in some cases it is not willing to trust its own data. Obviously, Spanish-speaking Catholics should be studied, and they should be studied in much greater detail than the Bureau of the Census studies. However, unless the Church is willing to fund research on the subject of the Spanish-speaking, it will not be able to rely on the "piggyback" work of secular institutions like NORC to provide it with data on that segment of the population.

(Continued on page 702)

DOROTHY DAY BIRTHDAY MASS

To commemorate her 80th birthday, friends of Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker have arranged the celebration of a Mass on Monday, Nov. 7 at 6:30 P.M. Place: St. Joseph's Church, 359 Sixth Ave. & Washington Place, New York City. All are welcome.

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ECONOMIC WOES

Not all the economic news is bad. Housing starts for August were up 32 percent over the same month last year, an encouraging sign. But steel is in trouble. The Campbell plant of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, which has been in operation since the end of the last century, will soon close down almost entirely. The result: 5000 vanished jobs and a loss of a $100 million annual payroll for the Ohio community, aside from the disappearance of other jobs in related industries. At Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the steel corporation of the same name is eliminating the jobs of 2500 white-collar workers at one stroke; U.S. Steel is eliminating from 2500 to 4500 salaried jobs. So far the current figure of layoffs in the troubled steel industry is 18,000. Add to this the ever widening American trade deficit which it is now estimated will run to $30 billion this year, or more than four times the record of $6.4 billion set in 1972—a development that Treasury Secretary W. Michael Blumenthal admits is "worrisome."

The Youngstown steel workers have been ruled eligible for special federal assistance on the ground that import competition was an important factor in the elimination of their jobs. In line with this it was also announced that President Carter is considering negotiating temporary steel import quotas with the European Common Market and Japan in an effort to curb unemployment in the industry and to head off more radical protective action by Congress. Similar relief has already been granted to the color television and shoe industries, and Mr. Carter's resolve to take such action is likely to be strengthened by the recent Treasury Department ruling that five key Japanese steel importers have been "dumping" steel on the U.S. market, i.e., selling it below cost. Congress is understandably sensitive on this issue; Representative John H. Buchanan, Republican of Alabama, spoke for a good number of his colleagues when he complained

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that European and Japanese producers were "exporting unemployment" and served notice on the administration that "if our friends can't find a way to help us, we will devise means to help ourselves." Protectionist sentiment is running high in Congress, particularly in the congressional steel caucus consisting of 120 representatives and 25 senators. Clearly a disastrous return to high protectionist trade walls in this country is not out of the question.

In spite of all this, President Carter struck a reasonably optimistic note at the meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Saying that international economic health depended on performance by individual nations, Mr. Carter told the assembled bankers that the United States would achieve its goal of 6 percent growth this year and was committed to a "vigorous" activity in 1978. He was, however, indirectly critical of other nations, pointing out that the slowing pace of economic activity abroad was a key factor in the large trading deficit of the United States—a deficit that promotes layoffs and continued unemployment. But the Joint Economic Committee of Congress was not willing to go along with Mr. Carter's optimistic self-estimate of U.S. policies and accomplishments. In a pessimistic report, the Joint Economic Committee attacked the Federal Reserve System for having "systematically obstructed recovery" since the 1974 recession. Further, it was dubious about the prospects for cutting inflation, fighting unemployment and achieving Mr. Carter's 1981 goal of a balanced budget. Administration budget policy, it said, was "unadventuresome." Economic growth next year would fall into a 4 to 4½ percent range rather than the 6 percent growth President Carter cited, it estimated.

In short, there is little reason for any rosy optimism, either in this country or among our trading partners overseas. France is urging the world's industrialized nations to adopt a system it calls "organized free trade" for problem-plagued industries such as steel, shipbuilding, textiles and aircraft. Without going into detail here, France's proposal would call for a higher degree of international cooperation than has yet been achieved. And whatever the merits or demerits of this particular plan, it illustrates what is perhaps the main bright spot in the whole picture, the growing recognition of the dimensions of economic problems, the recognition that they involve social and political consequences far beyond mere dollars and cents impact, and indeed that their ramifications are national and international as well as local. Once this fact is fully and finally recognized, we can begin the really hard task: the creation on the regional, national and international levels of social and political machinery really adequate to deal with these complex problems—a development that will call for social planning and political intervention in economic life and a willingness to undertake international cooperation on a scale hitherto unknown in this country. But if disaster is to be avoided, such a development is essential. Youngstown is serious, but it is only a small portent of what might lie in the future.

WASHINGTON REPORT

ISRAEL BACK AND FORTH

Taken at face value, the Carter administration's mugwumping, wiggle-waggle, weather-vane record of what are never quite policy statements on Israel, the Arab states, the Palestine Liberation Organization, a national "homeland" for the Palestinians, defensible borders for Israel and the "return" of "occupied" territories resembles nothing so much as the supreme embodiment in life of the political principle most economically created in art by the late Guy Kibbee playing a Corn Belt Pol: "Yes," Kibbee would drawl judiciously, laying a finger alongside his nose, raising his eyebrows thoughtfully, "and again, no."

It was a masterful non-answer and the administration has been masterfully playing it for months now. Life being so much less tidy than art, the Carterites have never achieved, never come close, really, to the artistic compression that enabled Kibbee to wrap it in four words and five seconds. President Carter and Secretary Vance, solo or in tandem, sometimes assisted by smaller cheeses in the State Department, or independent powers in Senate or House, even New York's mayoral contest, have never gotten the time from Kibbee's Yes to his No much under twenty-four hours, more often running to several days, sometimes a couple of weeks. The extended time has enabled little dramas to develop of petition and reassurance, recriminations in legislative halls, at airports, on the lawn of the Executive Mansion, followed ineluctably by understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation in time for the evening news.

All of these movements and countermovements recall the gesticulations of several of "Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines," desperately trying to keep aloft by constant moving of planes, vanes, props and drops, alternatively those of a swimmer treading water, in both cases, those of one not really trying to get any place, more than happy to do all that running just to stay where he is.

The impression is probably accurate: no one can be

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that self-contradictory, that consistently inconsistent, without knowing it and without doing it for the same very good reasons that impel the men in their flying machines and the treader of water: if the alternative is crashing to earth or sinking without a trace beneath the sullen seas, then staying where you are is a justifiable, even admirable, goal.

This reading can be interpreted simply as normal cynicism on the part of the administration, on the one hand preserving the Jewish support that is crucial to the survival of the Carter presidency beyond 1980, on the other maintaining the semblance of sympathy with the Arab states whose oil-rich members have done it before and could do it again with devastating effects on the future of Jimmy Carter. No doubt such thoughts are not entirely absent from the mind of whoever is programming the flips and the flops that have composed the Carter administration's public utterances about the Middle East.

Beyond that political prudence, however, there are entirely legitimate considerations of statecraft that may well be the main motive of the flip-floppery. Motivation aside, those considerations are being served by the flip-floppery and being served well. Off-hand, I can think of no truly available course of action by the administration that would serve the cause of peace in the Middle East anywhere near as well as it is served by the flip-flops.

This country could, for example, occupy Israel and compel it to recognize the "legitimate demands" and so on of the Palestinians for their homeland in the Gaza strip, the West Bank and half of Jerusalem. Only we can't, really. For one thing, the Israelis would fight and on the record of the last several decades, fighting is something they do better than we do.

Alternatively, we could easily enough plan and execute an air-sea-land invasion of the area that would surround Israel with American forces and thus guarantee that state's security against the surrounding Arab states. Only we can't do that either, because there is the oil weapon, to eliminate which opens prospects Vietnamese in scale and duration.

Unilateral American military action thus out of the question, what can the country do? Flipping and flopping seems the best available action.

Consider. If you take all those self-contradictory administration statements of the last several months as meaning something positive, not just treading water, the positive something they can most likely mean is a kind of vision of a Geneva meeting as painted by the American primitive Edward Hicks in his Peaceable Kingdom series. The lamb lies down with the lion, giving up what defensive weapons the lamb has acquired because it is now confident of the lion's good intentions. For its part, the lion will undertake to respect the lamb's right to exist and everything will be hunky-dory in this best of all possible Middle Easts.

Translated: Israel will "return" to Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon the pieces of land it gained fighting off invasions by Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon over the years and in addition allow to be created some sort of Palestinian state in what remains of the original Israel, a state inescapably to be dominated by the fearless baby-killers of the PLO. In return, the PLO will stop killing babies and unarmed athletes, highjacking planes, taking hostages and similar techniques of its freedom fighting, the Arab states will happily recognize Israel's existence and formally give up their long, many times renewed effort to drive the hated Zionists into the sea. A latterday Hicks may even paint in Secretary Vance, togged out as William Penn making his famous treaty with the Indians which, as we all know, has resulted in Pennsylvania, as both colony and state, maintaining perfect equality between Quakers and Indians.

It isn't going to happen, folks, and the sooner we all realize that, the more prepared we shall be for the media shock that will erupt when it doesn't happen at Geneva or anywhere else.

The reason it isn't going to happen is very simple. The Israelis have absolutely no reason to believe that the Arab states, still less the PLO, have changed in the least from their long-standing and often proclaimed determination to destroy the state of Israel. What Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon—insofar as there may be said to be a Lebanese state—have come to recognize is that they don't really have much chance to accomplish the old Nasserian dream of driving them into the sea: at least, under present circumstances. If the circumstances can be changed, returned, perhaps, to status quo ante, well, who knows, it might be worth while to try the game again, especially if the alternative is seriously addressing monumental domestic problems of economics, social justice and human rights. The conversion of the PLO even to that kind of minimum acceptance of the hardest of reality has about as much chance as the analogous conversion to the acceptance of reality on the part of the IRA-Provos and the Rev. Ian Paisley elsewhere in the world. It is always easier to be Bonnie Charlie than a crofter scratching a living from a hard land; it is even easier to be Saladin come again than the anonymous agronomist most sorely needed in the Arab countries.

If the Israeli-Arab conflict is thus fated to smolder on for at least the rest of this century and probably a good deal longer one way or another, the best thing outsiders of good will can do is to contribute what they can to the avoidance of outright war, a possibility that seems better now than formerly, but by no means a probability.

By enabling the parties to maintain some kind of hope for negotiating victory, the Carter-Vance flip-flops are far from futile gestures.

FRANK GETLEIN

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ABOARD THE PRINCESS MARGUERITE

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Columnists are supposed to know what they think. The certitudes set out for our instruction by James Reston, David Broder, George Will, Mary McGrory, Meg Greenfield, William Buckley, Michael Novak, *et al*, often strike me with awe and admiration. For I so often am not sure what things mean. I observe or share them; they suggest to me possibilities, or explain the sources of the complexity in the human condition. They seem worth noting. But I can't quite pin their significance down.

For example, I took a trip west this past summer and one evening of that trip brightens life a little whenever I remember it. We were aboard the *Princess Marguerite*, the boat which carries tourists from Victoria, British Columbia, to Seattle and back. We had been forewarned that it was best to make a beeline for the cocktail lounge on the top deck and stake out a window table. In this way we assured ourselves comfort and a fine view of the darkly wooded shores and islands of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, and of Puget Sound, during the four-hour voyage.

Sure enough, the lounge was bright and airy, the waitresses and bartenders pleasant. It was very soon crowded with good-natured passengers content to share tables with strangers. By judiciously alternating our orders of white wine and sandwiches we managed to stay there for the whole trip. Two Canadian business women—one from Winnipeg, the other from Victoria—on their way to Seattle to buy, joined us. A black man, in a sports suit but wearing a chief petty officer's cap, shared the next table with a young couple in jeans. Nearby were two engineers who hopefully offered chairs to various young women as they came and went. Sometimes their offer was accepted; sometimes not. Not far away sat a trio of pant-suited women, not young, not old—women of the indeterminate age and kind it seems all right to call "girls" even in this feminist age, because they so clearly think of themselves that way—and why not? Even nearer sat a woman of elegant bones and dress, who looked French. She pleasantly fended off companions until some young people she considered the proper sort appeared and she waved them to her table.

The variety in the crowd became even more apparent once the piano bar-type musicians got going. The singers, not very good but willing, were two professional Irishmen in green tam-o-shanters. They set the tone with sentimental renditions (are there any other kind?) of *A Little Bit of Heaven* and *My Wild Irish Rose*. They besought the crowd for requests and banged out on cue jazz versions of current favorites, old ballads, rock songs, civil rights songs, state and national songs—all sung or played with much the same sound and beat but with infectious enthusiasm.

Following their lead we sang "Waltzing Matilda" for a traveling Australian, "Alouette" with table-pounding fervor for a French-Canadian, "Amazing Grace" for some Georgians, "I'll be in Scotland afore ye" for Canadians and Americans of that heritage. We sang Nashville country songs, college songs, and, a bit sorrowfully, Elvis songs. They sang the *Minnesota Rouser* for me, and a new London rock favorite sent the English-born waitress happily stepping to beat between the tables. Somehow, with the water slipping by and the slanting sun of the Northwest's long summer evening shining in, it all seemed happier, more genuine and friendly than the induced conviviality in the fusty darkness of most eastern lounges.

The "girls" turned out to be of Texas origin. They responded to "Deep in the Heart of—" and "The Yellow Rose of—" by jitter-bugging vigorously with each other and singly between the tables. They had rhythm. Once started, they kept it up. One seemed to be dancing even sitting down. Their example set one of the engineers jiving down the deck to join first one, then the others. From then on similar spontaneous dancing burst out here and there in response to music particularly pleasing to one person or another. Every effort drew general applause.

Just as the lights of Seattle became visible through the first dark there was a climax which set everyone cheering. Three young people linked arms and started an energetic *hora*, the joyous Israeli group dance. The musicians kept time; other dancers, all young, rose to link arms with them, and around they went, in and out the doors, down between the tables, back and around the bar, breaking off finally at their own tables, breathless and smiling.

What did it all mean? That real brotherhood exists in the west? Probably not. That there people are a little less conscious of difference as division, a little more appreciative of variety? It could be. Although there was a good sprinkling of travelers, most of the people were from either Washington or British Columbia. They knew each other's songs, old and new—something I have noticed that is not true in the east. Or did it mean indifference, a lack of identity and commitment in a materialistic, rootless people on the edge of the continent? There are people

(Continued on page 702)

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THE DEVIOUS EMPLOYEES

JOHN T. NOONAN, JR.

The Confraternity version: twiddle-twaddle and smarmy pap

The unjust steward of the Gospel of Luke has now become, in the standard text copyrighted by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and carried in American missals and leaflets, "the devious employee." The phrase is used to translate "ton oikonomon tes adikias" in Luke 16:8. The verse, as translated, becomes:

> The owner then gave his devious employee credit for being enterprising.

The line beggars satire. It ranks with earlier efforts of the American school of translation, where a woman lost "a dime" and rejoiced with her neighbors when she found it, and John became a herald (Harold?) crying in the wilderness.

There are four things wrong with the translation here. It is inaccurate. It betrays a poor sense of English. It loosens the connections between the different parts of the parable which the original phrase maintained. It is unfaithful to the traditions of our church and of our language.

The translation is inaccurate because the man involved is not any "employee." He is an "oikonomos" or one responsible for the management of a household. Earlier, the translator has rendered the word as "manager." This term itself is scarcely exact. In societies where persons are in charge of households on behalf of their masters they are not managers in the sense that we think of a "plant manager" or "store manager." The exact term is "steward," a word which catches nicely the familial nature of the domestic administrator's role. But "manager" at least identifies a figure of authority. To put in its place at the parable's end the vague impersonal word "employee" is to abandon the conception of the central figure in the story.

"Devious" itself is no better; indeed it is worse. The term translated is "adikias" meaning literally "of unrighteousness." Turning the genitive into English, one may translate "unrighteous," or "wicked" or "sinful" or "unjust." The steward is an unrighteous man, the parable teller says; he is unjust. Now the word "devious" may mean "shifty," "tricky," "unscrupulous," and even "unfair." It does note denote wicked. As an adjective for the steward's conduct, it is not inappropriate. As a characterization of the man, as a faithful translation of the Gospel, it does not do the job.

The imperfection of the translation, as we already have seen, arises in part from the translator's poor grasp of English. Striving to be colloquial, he translates the steward's reflection to himself on his course of action by the words, "I have it!" If the translator wanted truly colloquial English, he should have written, "I've got it!" If he did not want to be colloquial, why did he not stick to the text and translate simply, "I know what I shall do"?

Striving to be modern, the translator has made "o kyrios," or master, of verse 8 an "owner." He has forgotten the echo that the Greek has of the word for the Lord. Striving to be modern, he has the master commend the employee for "being enterprising," where the Greek had "phronimos opoinesen"—"acting prudently." He has taken his line from an Horatio Alger story; he has forgotten that prudence, not enterprise, is one of the cardinal virtues. Striving to be modern, he has the master "give credit" where the text has "praise." He has forgotten that the parable itself is about giving

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credit in a financial sense; his colloquial usage jars the mind as it follows an example of the other sense. Combined with "owner" and "employee," the image that comes to mind is credit with the business. Our translator need only have added that this employee did not forfeit his Social Security by his deviant behavior.

Only someone steeped in the clichés of bureaucracy would care to use "employee" where a more precise term exists. Only someone whose ear has been formed by reading the newspapers would use a fudge-phrase like "devious" where the Gospel says "wicked." Of course bureaucrats like to think of the mass of men they manage as employees. Of course the press will call something that is dishonest "controversial" and something that is wrongful "devious." A sense of the law of libel coupled with an unwillingness to take a moral stand inclines the daily paper to use caution and to employ circumlocution. But Jesus and his reporters did not go about characterizing Herod's conduct as "controversial" and wicked behavior as "devious."

The third fault of the translation is its deliberate destruction of the verbal pattern of the parable. The "oikonomos" is introduced in verse I of chapter 16. He is told in verse 3 to render an account of his "oikonomias" or stewardship, for he can no longer "oikonomein" or be a steward. As verse 3 continues, the "oikonomos" says to himself that his master is going to take away his "oikonomian." In verse 4 he decides what to do when removed from his "okonomias." In verse 8 the master praises the "oikonomon tes adikias" for acting prudently. In verse 10 Jesus tells his listeners to make friends of the 'mamona tes adikias." The term for "steward" or "stewardship" is thus used six times in eight lines, the term "adikias" twice in three lines. The repetition knits the parable together.

The sound repeated is not only mnemonic. It is emphatic in focusing on the steward. It is his acts as a steward that are the sinews of the parable. His wrongfulness is picked up in an association of ideas with wrongful "mamona" or wealth. There is an exemplification of injustice in his behavior which illustrates the meaning of injustice as applied to worldly property. There is a movement from the story to the moral, which the repetition of "adikias" effects.

Our translator, however, has been far cleverer than the evangelist. Not for him the dull repetition of the same term. He uses "manager" twice at the start. He substitutes "service" for "stewardship" in verse 3 and eliminates one repetition by using an "it." He eliminates another by using the cliché "when I am let go" for the original's "when I am removed from stewardship." In the same line he uses "devious," leaving him without a connection with verse 10 where the "manona tes adikias" becomes "this world's goods."

In this final, climactic betrayal of the Gospel's sense the translator gives us a real sense of himself—a bland, harmless, well-meaning soul, who shrinks from offending anyone by calling riches "the mammon of iniquity," as the phrase used to be translated, or even from following Jesus and speaking of "wrongful wealth," or "wicked wealth" or "sinful wealth" or "unjust wealth." No, he will characterize all property as "this world's goods," using a blank and inexact paraphrase to replace a fierce denunciation. In the process of course he cuts the verbal and logical tie to the parable.

The cut is not only inflicted on the Gospel, but on the tradition of the church and on the tradition of English literature. The unjust steward in Christian moral teaching is a figure of the Christian who fails to use rightly the property entrusted to him. "Who are stewards?" asks Thomas Aquinas commenting on this parable, and he answers that God first established angels and then men as His stewards or as His dispensers (*Sermon* 6:3). How does Thomas sound if we say God first established angels and then men as His employees?

As for "mammon,"the deepest cut effected by the translator is the reference to the Gospel of Matthew 6:24 "You cannot serve God and mammon." The verbal concordance is severed. Even more fundamentally the personification of wealth as a master is destroyed. Lost, too, is the resonance of the term which permits Thomas Aquinas to say analogically on John 6:5 "By mammon there may be understood the devil, who rules over riches and is as if he were his own god."

As for the use of the term in English, it is as old as Langland (*Piers Plowman*, a text, 9, 81). It has been used by authors as different as Bishop Latimer, Washington Irving and John Keble (see *Oxford English Dictionary* at "Mammon"). It is part of the English tongue. Why should its root in the Gospel be uprooted?

I have concentrated on the deficiencies in 9 verses of the Confraternity translation read on the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The deficiencies are palpable and gross. They are fresh in my mind because I heard this version read only yesterday. But I would wager that at least every third Sunday the Confraternity translation contains gross deficiencies, and I am aware almost every Sunday of some palpable deficiency in the English of the translation.

Much of this work has been tainted by a subtle sense of superiority on the translator's part. The American layman is not familiar with a servile or feudal society; he meets stewards today only in clubs, ships, planes, or railroad dining cars. *Ergo*, it is assumed, he will be incapable of accepting the term "steward" as it is used in another social context. The American layman is used to seeing many synonyms: it is the way sportswriters write, using "pigskin" instead of repeating "football." *Ergo*, the American layman will want pigskins in his reading of the Gospel. The American layman does not ordinarily use "mammon" in speaking of the rich. *Ergo*,

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a phrase traditionally difficult for preachers must be eliminated. In all of these supercilious judgments there is a snobbery, an elitism, which in the guise of kindness patronizes and offends.

For a decade the church in the United States has put up with inferior English in the translation of the Bible in the Mass. For seven years the Lectionary of the Confraternity has been in existence and held sway. There has been no improvement. How much longer are we to be patient? Our children are being robbed of a precious English heritage and are being denied a true translation of the Word of God. We ourselves are being impoverished, cut off from our churchly and literary inheritance, and subjected to mealy-mouthed clichés in place of the pure milk of the Gospels. The truly devious employees, the truly unjust stewards are those who have substituted their own twiddle-twaddle for the language of the Lord or of Luke.

The matter is too important to be left to the technicians. They have defaulted. The students of biblical languages and ancient manuscripts who have contributed to our modern plight have evidently never listened to English. The religious educators and ecclesiastical bureaucrats who have put the seal of approval on this translation have preferred smarmy pap to the rhythms of Jesus. The American bishops should take this translation, condemn it and ban it from the churches. They should start afresh to seek the sound and sense of the Bible and have its words truthfully translated into English.

THE ISHERWOOD GENERATION

BERNARD McCABE

Auden and the Edwardian children

"What shall the self-conscious man do to be saved?" asks Auden in 1934. He really means, "What shall the artist do to be saved?" a question very earnestly echoed again and again by the young writers who grouped themselves around him: Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice, and in his own way, Christopher Isherwood. These were the central figures in what Samuel Hynes calls *The Auden Generation* (Viking, $12.95).

They had been Edwardian children, born just too late to participate in the First World War, the great catastrophe that shook the liberal rationalist tradition of Spender's background as much as it shook the Christian orthodox tradition of Auden and Isherwood. The postwar twenties, when they were all at Oxford or Cambridge—half-wishing they had been in the War and had proved themselves—was a period of shock, a shock recorded variously by their immediate elders in such works as *Kangaroo, Journey's End, Goodbye To All That, Antic Hay, The Waste Land.* In the twenties, too, Nietsche, Freud, and Marx, all subverters of the old order, had at last all made their mark in England.

So in the thirties most young intellectuals found in their personal inheritance a "chaos of values" (Auden's words). They also found chaos in the world about them: at home poverty and depressed wages, millions out of work; abroad fascist takeovers in Italy and Germany, Stalinism in Russia. Above all, another Great War was on the way, and everybody knew it. So politics were on everybody's doorstep, public commitment seemed unavoidable, and extremist positions beckoned.

In such an atmosphere these writers needed to see their art as something more than art. To keep their self-respect in revolutionary times—"to be saved"—they must produce poems (everyone save Isherwood was a poet) that could also be acceptable as modes of political action. So when Stephen Spender in 1934 speaks of striving "to relate the public passion to my private life," the public passion is politics and his private life is his life as a lyric poet. Lyrics and politics don't easily mix. But politics became the subject of their verse and the counterclaims of art and political action the subject of their critical debate.

Topicality or expediency both sharpened and limited their work. The group's inclination, as disinherited liberals, was to the Left; anti-fascist positions came naturally to rejectors of history's recent nightmare—though the shift from pacifism to militancy was a harsh one to make—and some form of Marxist analysis seemed the most fluent method of banishing monopoly capitalism, imperialism, armaments manufacturers and the ills they brought with them: colonialism, war, poverty. Efficacy on the Left was claimed most effectively by the Communist Party, and all the Auden Generation became at one time or another party-members or fel-

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low-travelers. The publications they wrote for, *New Verse, New Signatures,* and especially John Lehmann's *New Writing,* quite strikingly reflect this bias.

Reconciling poetry and revolution was difficult. The young critic Christopher Caudwell and the very young poet John Cornford insisted to the end that a writer's only hope lay in Communism and total identification with the workers. Spender and company first agreed, but then found more honesty in accepting a divided self. To relive these ideological battlings, against a background of news from Moscow (of the purges) and from Spain (where their real battle was being fought, and where Caudwell and Cornford died) is to rehearse yet again the tragedy of twentieth century liberalism.

Dropping One's Aitches

The Auden Generation were all upper middle-class, public school, Oxford or Cambridge people, full of witty high-speed allusions, private jokes and the assurance of their class. Dangerously close as they were to Isherwood's "Poshocracy" (accurately identified and pinned-down in his *Lions and Shadows*), some of them took pains to cultivate a working-class look; Auden in cloth cap and moleskin breeches, working at dropping his aitches, must have been a pleasantly comic sight (see Cyril Connolly's amusing *Where Engels Fears to Tread,* 1937). But there was a sinister side to their enthusiasms; the willingness to publish wooden *agit-prop* "literature" supplied from Russia (one appalling story I exhumed from a 1937 *New Writing:* P. Tchikvadze's "The Road to Affluence," glorifying collective farms), for example, or the unpleasant obsession with the "Truly Strong Man," a Leader who was somehow to relieve this generation of its guilt and *Schadenfreude.* Hynes points out several occasions where Auden sounds dangerously fascist. His verse-play, *Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935) was praised simultaneously in the *Daily Worker* and the fascist Mosley's *Action.*

Hynes reads everything these writers wrote with great care and honesty, making coherent sense out of a mass of complex material; his book will always be useful as far as it goes. But here are some reservations. His subtitle is *Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s,* so his study goes beyond the Auden group and suggests a general inclusiveness. Of course no one can do everything, but his exclusions gape and yawn. Waugh is there, but none of his thirties fiction: *Scoop, Black Mischief, A Handful of Dust.* Isherwood's cousin Graham Greene is represented only by an "entertainment" of his, *This Gun for Hire,* and the early *It's a Battlefield;* no mention of *Brighton Rock* or *The Power and the Glory*—a thirties political novel if there ever was one. And there is no attempt to examine what Catholicism meant to these two writers, or the range of their political views from Right to Left. Nothing of conservative contemporaries like Anthony Powell and Henry Green, both very good novelists, better writers in fact than some of Auden's group, and little or no working-class literature. No Roy Campbell, that Franco-loving self-appointed scourge of "MacSpaunday" as he collectively dubbed the poets on the Left. Campbell was a contentious and rather horrible man but he was a good satirist, and well known. Finally, and most puzzlingly, Hynes ignores *Homage to Catalonia,* probably Orwell's best book, and surely a key work on one of Hynes's key topics: British liberal humanism confronting political absolutism.

* * *

> *Trapped by their education, pinned down by their capital, they remained on top of their leaning tower, and their state of mind as we see it reflected in their poems and plays and novels is full of discord and bitterness, full of confusion and compromise.*

That is Virginia Woolf's very persuasive and dismissive view. The thirties were a hard time for young upper-class writers. Who in fact did write well? Auden, of course, often. He was a prophet for the group, an explorer: "Wystan lone flyer, birdman, my bully boy," sang Day Lewis in *New Country.* But in my view Christopher Isherwood was the most important writer of them all in the political thirties, really a novelist's more than a poet's decade. Although at the time he made few overt political commitments, and although he participated hardly at all in the public debates about art and politics, Isherwood got more actually said about the social, political, psychological, and moral disease of England and Europe in his autobiographical novel, *Lions and Shadows* (1937) and in his two small masterpieces, *The Last of Mr. Norris* (1935) and *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939); than all the rest of them put together.

But his recent books about the period, absorbing as they are, seem by contrast unsatisfactory. That the Broadway and Hollywood remakings of the Berlin novels betray the originals is hardly surprising. John Van Druten's adaptation, *I Am a Camera*—a great box-office success for Julie Harris on stage and screen—smoothed and sweetened Isherwood's comic but grim tales. Then came the absurd *Cabaret* with Liza Minelli, a sort of *Laugh-In* tourist's version of wicked Berlin. What is more puzzling, however, are the remakings that Isherwood himself has offered, not of the Berlin stories as such but of the *persona* that lies behind them. The latest of these is *Christopher and His Kind* (Farrar, Straus, $10).

The Berlin novels were rightly admired in the thirties as brilliant and complex portraits of a world on the edge of new disaster. With distance we have also come

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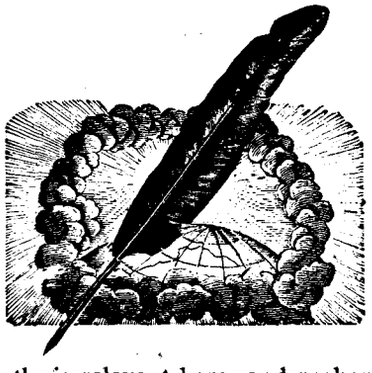
to admire *how* it was all done, how Isherwood the observer-character is at the same time in and beyond the scene, a marvelously balanced presence intervening in the subtlest ways to suggest a way of looking at what is being reported. These books, apparently so "simply" written, are of the same world as *Prufrock,* say, or *Ulysses.* Isherwood, a direct heir of the symbolists (his first novel *All The Conspirators* 1930, gives the clue) was a master of what Rilke found in Cézanne—"unlimited objectivity."

Unfortunately what has happened in *Christopher and His Kind* is a shift from the exterior objects of Isherwood's attention to an absorbed interest in Isherwood himself. The result is diverting, and undoubtedly is gossip of a high order—all the Auden Generation is there—but hardly the masterpiece that Gore Vidal's recent loud cries have announced. Whereas *Mr. Norris,* for example, manipulates a fine balance between observer and observed, this book is only a re-telling—"as frank and factual as I can make it"—of Isherwood's personal life in the thirties. Frankness largely means that his homosexuality, partially or indirectly revealed in earlier versions, is now openly acknowledged or, rather, fully recorded and celebrated. (The cruel history of the homosexual's treatment in England and in the United States, the earlier obligation to hide or disguise the truth, is relevant here, and perhaps also Isherwood's honorable role as a gay activist in the last few years.)



Isherwood's book tells an extraordinary story of desperate attachments, loves and hates, squabbles and fights, ecstasies and agonies and betrayals, and he and his assorted lovers, male prostitutes, fellow artists and hangers-on wander spasmodically about a Europe on the edge of the new catastrophe. As Matthew Arnold said of Shelley and his traveling household: "What a set! What a world!" The real life models for the Berlin stories' most arresting characters—Mr. Norris, Sally Bowles, and the Berlin bar-boy Otto—are sketched in in some detail. Each is outrageous, unscrupulous, even treacherous; each is wonderfully resourceful, charming and endlessly entertaining. *The* Isherwood types. In *Christopher and His Kind,* Isherwood builds these paradoxes around himself. The book records various meannesses and irresponsibilities of his own; it is also full of grins and giggles— two preferred Isherwood words. "Wystan," he tells us at one point, "once told me, almost admiringly, that I was the cruelest and most unscrupulous person that he had ever met." So there he is. Yet it's still impossible not to be interested in this latest version of Isherwood in the thirties—the writing is as lively and limpid as ever, in fact disturbingly so.

In 1939 Auden and Isherwood left England for America. This caused a big fuss in war-worried England, with some indignant talk of betrayal, Roy Campbell leaping to the attack, and Evelyn Waugh making a heavyhanded lunge at them as "Parsnip and Pimpernel" in *Put Out More Flags,* a dull moment in a bright novel. Isherwood introduces an uncharacteristic organ note in his new book to record the pairs' arrival in the New World in hopeful search of new lovers.

In New York, Auden soon wrote two memorable poems, *In Memoriam: W. B. Yeats,* and *September 1, 1939.* He also resumed communion with the Anglican Church. Isherwood, in California, for some time wrote very little. Then he surprised some people by becoming a Vedentist and a Quaker. Both renounced all political activism.

In retrospect, much of Auden's Marxist period seems to have been no more than a variant on the intellectual games he played so cleverly in his thirties' poetry; games with the idea of School, with Icelandic myths, with Freud. Although for a while he saw the poet's duty to be the writing of "parables," he wrote them with uncertain seriousness (see, for example, his 1933 lyric "A Communist To Others"). Auden's call for "New styles of architecture, a change of heart" never led him beyond his middle-class sensibility. It's no surprise to find that Terry Eagleton, a Marxist critic, in fact finds in Auden a classic example of bourgeois intellectual "bad faith," as Sartre defines it.

Could one say the same of Isherwood? In 1942, announcing his Vedantism and Pacifism, Isherwood wrote that in Europe he had been "an atheist, a liberal, a supporter of the Popular Front and an advocate of armed resistance to Fascism." Yet virtually nothing of those serious earlier preoccupations is remembered or thought worth recording in *Christopher and His Kind.* The effect is curiously empty. In the opening pages we are told that he and Auden went off to Berlin for a quite specific purpose: "Berlin meant Boys." The boys in question were poor, unemployed, working-class men, as often as not hetereosexual by inclination but willing to sell their bodies to these monied young leftists who "needed a working-class foreigner" in order to relax sexually. "A colonial situation," Isherwood remarks later. Well, yes, nothing more attractive than that.

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AN AGENDA FOR WASHINGTON

PETER STEINFELS

Suite 617 at 853 Broadway, just off of New York's Union Square, is hardly your well-appointed corporate or foundation office. With its strictly no-nonsense, hand-me-down desks and filing cabinets, it may even beat out *Commonweal*'s office as an example of "less is more" carried to the point of foolhardiness. But there is a law of organizational as well as intellectual activity—second-class furnishings often go with first-class work. The work being done in Suite 617 is not only first-class, it is crucial: the organization of a coalition for a "Democratic Agenda," which will meet in Washington on November 11-13.

The first item on the Democratic Agenda is full-employment, the password that every Democratic candidate, including Jimmy Carter, remembered on the march toward the White House but curiously forgot once the inner sanctum was reached. Full employment is critical to the millions who are without jobs, and whose lack of work often takes a toll on self-esteem and family life going far beyond the drop in income. But full employment is also critical to the rest of us: without it, inner-cities and whole regions are doomed to decay; environmental protection is sure to be pitted against the scarcity of jobs; polarization between groups will increase as women and minorities see their hard-won employment gains slipping away; talents will be wasted as the lack of opportunity kills ambition.

Social policy in America has run along three different, though not necessarily exclusive, lines: a job strategy (full employment); a service strategy (compensatory education, social work, guidance); and income strategy (straightforward income transfers like the negative income tax or family assistance). For some years the proponents of an income strategy criticized the old service approach; they were not always fair, but they had a point—the government was far better at writing checks than at delivering services. Unfortunately, as the fate of welfare reform has shown, the public didn't buy the income strategy either. Americans believe that check-writing ought to take place in conjunction with some honest labor. Though Americans are often confused —and sometimes purposely misled— about the work status of most welfare recipients, their view (also the view of welfare recipients themselves) expresses a sound instinct, a belief in work as a way of shaping one's life and a mark of responsible adulthood.

In short, we come round to the jobs strategy. But why didn't we go that route in the first place? Ten years ago, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, with characteristic acumen, pointed out the concomitants of a full employment economy. "First, American business would have to give up its present, near-absolute freedom to operate at whatever level of economic activity it chooses. . . . Few other sizable business communities in the world have this freedom: in general, in the industrial democracies, social decisions about the level of employment have priority over private decisions. . . ."

Trade unions in fields like construction would have to loosen their control on jobs; investors would have to cope with inflation; the government would have to trim its foreign ventures to fit a tighter balance of payments situation; and "those parts of the nation that persist in providing the least education and job-related training would be forced to submit to national minimum standards."

In short, doing anything as basic as full employment "would disrupt a vast array of entrenched social arrangements, changing not only the distribution of wealth, but probably also the distribution of power."

That may explain why the people working so hard at Suite 617 are democratic socialists like Michael Harrington. The Democratic Agenda is not a specifically socialist project; full employment, after all, has long been a goal of humane liberalism as much as democratic socialism. But to attack it afresh will certainly require going beyond the standard liberal solutions.

At the moment those solutions include the Humphrey-Hawkins full-employment bill, which Congress and the administration may revive partly out of sentiment for the ailing Humphrey, partly as a response to black criticism. But the bill, long weakened by compromise, may be ailing as much as its brave sponsor and the administration insists on weakening it further. At best, the bill might be one of those "first steps." At worst, it could give full-employment policy a bad name by its likely failure—and that would be a sorry memorial to Hubert Humphrey. Obviously, what is needed is a combination of political pressure and new ideas.

Thus the November conference. All who write to Suite 617 or show up at the Mayflower Hotel on Friday or Saturday will be welcomed. But they should expect something different from a mass political rally. Hundreds will attend—but millions will be represented. The conference is backed by the heads of the United Auto Workers, the Machinists' union, the Clothing and Textile Workers, the State, County and Municipal Employees; by Congressmen from the Black Caucus; by feminists and religious leaders. There will be a busy schedule of workshops dealing with inflation, economic planning, international economics, energy, city problems, and tax reform. Those urging full employment will themselves be fully employed.

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THE SCREEN

In its heyday, from *The Maltese Falcon* and *Double Indemnity* to *The Big Sleep* and *The Asphalt Jungle*, *film noir* was a genre exceptionally dependent on its literary sources. So is *The American Friend*, a new *film noir* by German director Wim Wenders. Just as Howard Hawks relied on Raymond Chandler and Billy Wilder on James M. Cain, so Wenders has been, by his own admission, greatly inspired by the Patricia Highsmith novel on which his film is based. Ms. Highsmith's novels provide an appropriate new twist for this genre, too. They take one step further the sort of hero common in the earlier versions of *film noir*. That hero is someone always in danger of becoming indistinguishable from the villains in his story. This is especially true with the serial heroes like Chandler's private eye, who only manages to stay a cut above his clients and the gangsters they get mixed up with by keeping a very firm grip on himself.

Perhaps the logical conclusion to which such heroism was leading all along is the one found in Highsmith's work, where the only serial hero to emerge so far is a man who is essentially a gangster himself—a man in whom heroism and villainy finally do become indistinguishable because he is both things at once. This man is Tom Ripley, the central character in, among other novels, *Ripley's Game* on which *The American Friend* is based. In Wenders's film version, Ripley (Dennis Hopper) is a purveyor of art forgeries who gets a framemaker named Jonathan (Bruno Ganz) mixed up with his gangster friends. Learning by chance that Jonathan has leukemia, Ripley suggests to a crony that Jonathan might be willing to become a hit man in order to leave his family with a large sum after he is dead. With false medical reports, the crony plays on Jonathan's anxiety about himself and lures him into committing two murders. The two-fold consequence is that Jonathan first becomes Ripley's friend, and then ends up betraying him.

The plot is really somewhat beside the point, however, as is so often the case in *film noir*. (Hawks once confessed that there was at least one murder in *The Big Sleep* which even he couldn't explain.) To the point is that Ripley and Jonathan, like every character in *film noir*, live in a world too complex and tortuous to be fathomed, a world whose human darkness makes it impenetrable. All revelation in *film noir* is circuitous. In order to understand the relationships between characters, we have to begin with the victims rather than the heroes —with Jonathan rather than Ripley—and we have to concentrate not on what happens so much as on the atmosphere in which it happens. During an interview Wenders confirmed for me what his film, like others in the genre, suggests: that the continuity he tried to maintain is in the atmospheric details much more than the plot itself.

The atmosphere of *The American Friend* is one in which, for instance, a painting of a speeding train that Ripley gets from a forger happens to be very like the picture of a train on the lamp in Jonathan's son's room, except that while Jonathan gazes at this second picture we hear a real train apparently going by outside. Then these pictures bizarrely complete their transformation into reality, becoming the Paris Metro trains on which Jonathan stalks the first man he kills and the Munich-Hamburg Express from which he and Ripley throw the second. In other words, the film has an atmosphere where images turn into actualities and, by implication, where a violence most of us know only from fiction or fantasy can become part of an ordinary man's life. It is similarly an atmosphere in which ordinary places or things become menacing and sinister. As Jonathan arrives in Paris for a medical, a man ahead of him at the top of an escalator suddenly falls down. In his hotel room, a knob on the television gives him a shock, and a crane outside the window swings around as if about to crash through.

Since Jonathan shoots his first victim on an escalator in the Metro, that man who falls on the escalator

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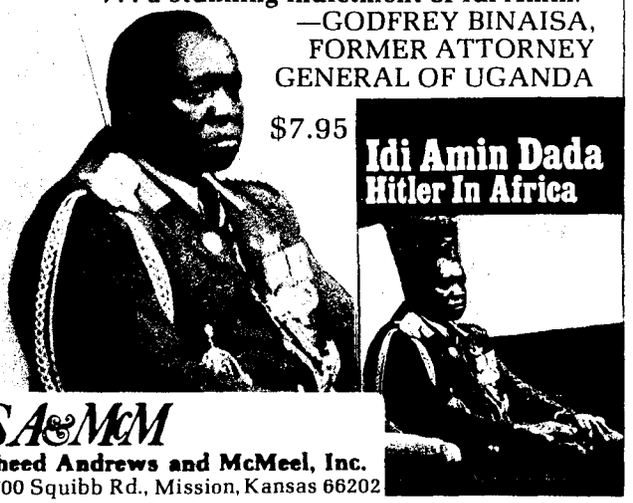

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at the Paris airport becomes a foreboding image. The shooting has a retroactive effect on our memory of the man who falls, and of Jonathan's own flight down an escalator earlier on his way to his doctor in Hamburg. Because they anticipate the scene of the murders, the pictures of trains ultimately function this way too, as do many other atmospheric details. The result of such calculated effects is to impart to Jonathan's story an oppressive feeling of inevitability. These baroque touches make it seem as if Jonathan lived in a deterministic world—as if he were doomed from the start. We come to feel, insanely, that Jonathan couldn't have *not* become a criminal. At its best *film noir* always gives us these irrational feelings that the characters are trapped in invisible ways. The fact that what happens to Jonathan is so arbitrary somehow makes his fate seem all the more irresistible. Why should Jonathan believe what some Mafioso tells him about his health instead of his doctor? That this question can't be answered in any rational way makes the fact that Jonathan does believe him seem an inescapable turn of events.

Of course, *film noir* has always maintained, with Heraclitus, that fate is character. If Jonathan trusts the gangsters, it is at least partly because he wants to and, deep down, craves the violence to which trusting them will expose him. (We discover this, as he does, when he is elated after his first murder.) Getting us to accept a crazy premise, such as the corruptibility of a man like Jonathan, is what *film noir* is all about. It makes us believe in a world gone mad, a world of lurid exaggeration and extreme artificiality. The minute Jonathan commits his first murder, Wenders plunges us headlong into this world. The yellow light of day and blue light of evening deepen into tangerine and purple. The imagery, which has only had subliminal designs on us until now, begins to become outrageous. Acting out his suspicion that he has been "framed," for instance, Jonathan pokes his head through a gilt picture frame he himself has made, and then smashes his handiwork to pieces as if trying to break free of his own fate. Coincidences even begin to occur that flaunt the improbability of the plot, as when Ripley happens to walk by a window behind which, at just that moment, a gangster is receiving a call about the shooting Ripley helped arrange in Paris.

The further we are drawn into this expressionistic world, the more it takes hold of our imagination and compels our assent to it. This is quite a feat on Wenders's part. No genre is harder to do original work in than *film noir*. The influence of the films in this genre has been so pervasive that all its possibilities seemed exhausted long ago. The best work of the last few years—*Gumshoe*, *The Long Goodbye*, *The Late Show*—suggested that the only thing left for *film noir* to do was parody itself. That this is not the case, though, Wenders's film makes clear.

(The first of two parts)

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

A POLITICS OF THE NURSERY

SAUL MALOFF

A book such as Jessica Mitford's *A Fine Old Conflict* (Knopf, $10) might have been is lamentably overdue: at this remove to look hard through relatively clarified air at a Communist "past," extending in her instance from the days of the Spanish Civil War to 1958, two years after Khrushchev's confessions to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. To look hard and steadily, without illusion but also without self-pity, without tears or whimpering, recriminations or craven pleas for forgiveness of sins, that depressing prelude to squalid capitulation made familiar by the like of Howard Fast, Bella Dodd, Whittaker Chambers, Louis Budenz and so many others of the " 'I-was-duped' school of American ex-party members."

Unburdened by remorse, or even a small ache of regret, Mitford in effect announces, moreover, that she will treat her subject with affection and humor as well as pride; and, one thinks on hearing this, how refreshing such a tone could prove, after all the sackcloth and ashes, muttered curses and terrible cries of the ravaged heart.

A still ampler bounty is promised: since she left the Party in anything but a vertigo of rage and disillusionment, but on the whole cheerfully and fondly, saying "au revoir but not goodbye, for I went on seeing lots of the comrades, giving what support I could to their endeavors," she is not interested in "sort[ing] out the tangle of events in the Communist world of the postwar era," in assessing the "changes in Communist strategy and tactics (or the Party Line, as it is called for short), the rise and fall of Party leaders." No, we are to be spared such tiresome analysis; instead, Mitford will undertake "merely to reconstruct my own experiences as a part of the [Red] Menace during those years and as an

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ex-Menace thereafter, to describe the fascination, difficulties and frequent joys of being an 'activist' in an embattled, proscribed (and, to me, occasionally comical) organization." In short, to dismantle the pernicious American myth of the "Communist conspiracy"—the "Red Menace"—by revealing in some demystifying detail the dailiness of her life as a minor Communist functionary.

But she was not the usual run of American (or British) functionary; she was the daughter of Lord and Lady Redesdale, themselves devoted admirers of Hitler, sister of the brilliant Nancy and of Diana, wife of Oswald Mosley, Britain's principal fascist, of course, and of—especially of—the incomparable Unity, Hitler's "perfect Nordic goddess": a rather impressive array when one considers it's merely one family we're talking about—a "nuclear" family, "Farve" and "Muv" and the kids—and not a fair-sized Central European principality.

Now, to be the hellraising daughter of such a family, even if it's not altogether the done thing, is, taking the wide view and making allowances for aristocratic eccentricity, at least understandable; but to be a teenage Communist (even if her untutored ear heard "fine old conflict" for "final conflict," that ringing call to Armageddon from the Internationale first heard while strolling in Hyde Park with Nanny or governess)—well, that's something else again. Upstairs in the great house the girls transformed the nursery into barricades, decorating the walls, in the mode of normal, healthy girls everywhere, with romantic images of Hitler on one side, Lenin on the other (darling mustache, cute cowlick; dashing beard, smoldering oriental eyes).

For Jessica (as for her sisters) it was no fling (unless there is such a thing as a lifelong fling): still in her teens she fled the manor-house, to Spain during the Civil War, where the teenager who would become her first husband (he was also her second cousin and Churchill's nephew) was a volunteer, and ultimately to the United States. When, in 1941, in defiance of the Party line (which, before the attack on the Soviet Union, proclaimed the war a "phony war") he left for Canada and the Royal Air Force, they exchanged a lovers' vow in the manner of enamored young people the world over: he would join the Party as soon as he got to England and she the American Party. Almost immediately he was killed in action; she remained to bear their child, make a new life for herself, first in wartime Washington, then in San Francisco and Oakland. She thought they'd never ask; but when finally the Party asked her in, she jumped. Muv and Farve must have dreaded her letters home: it wasn't enough that she had married an English Communist; she had to go and marry an American one—and a Jew to boot! There you have it, the world's saddest story: if you have children, you have no further need of enemies.

Few writers could resist making the most of such a family; Mitford is not one of them, however marginal the bizarre family romance may seem to her declared subject. In fact no opportunity is missed and, inevitably, this results in some sprightly comedy and snappy oneliners, the best of them provided, naturally enough, mostly by the famously witty Nancy. The richest comedy alas, is invisible: reported but unwitnessed meetings between Muv and Jessica's Jewish mother-in-law in New York, and the latter and Nancy in Paris. Certain delicate questions of family decorum and feeling are raised incidentally but never posed as such. While it's understandable that she never again saw Diana or Unity—after the war, oceans of blood separated them—her refusal to see her dying father poses a subtle question at the junction where rigid ideology and ordinary human feeling clash. Her father lay dying—"one of Nature's Fascists," one of his fascist daughters proudly called him; would she, her mother asked, come to bid him farewell? She presented conditions: no fascist fulminations, no Jew-baiting. Her mother replied that conditions in themselves, conditions as such in the grim circumstances, were unacceptable. Jessica never again saw her father. What would the Party have said? Her husband, a labor and civil rights lawyer, would scarcely have withered beneath a slur, one imagines; and it doesn't seem to occur to Mitford that what the Party (that is, some other functionary) might have said, if anything at all, is beside the point, which is, to repeat through clenched teeth, that the old chap was dying. Nor does it seem to have occurred to her that the Party need not have been consulted in the first place—indeed that it was of utmost importance that it *not* be consulted, and for the most powerful imaginable reason: it was simply none of its business. The heart's reason.

In the breathless, headlong, heedless, sometimes giggly and silly, babbling, chatty, often smug, prevailingly mindless and morally shallow scheme of the book, the great questions are either begged or offhandedly ignored, as if history had never posed them or no one ever thought of asking them. The greater part of her political energies was devoted to the Civil Rights Congress and there is no question in my mind (there wasn't then and isn't now) that the work was socially important and valuable. (Mitford freely, not to say complacently or indiscreetly, calls the organization a Communist "front," a creation of the Party: a grave question of propriety which needn't detain us here. There's also a question of truth. When is a front not a front? After all, many members were not Communists, simply people who espoused this or that inherently just cause.) In those bleakest days of the Cold War, in that dismal atmosphere associated with the names Truman, Nixon, Smith, McCarran, Mundt, McCarthy, HUAC and its Senate counterparts, and other patriots, what other multitudes actively opposed police brutality, segregated neighborhoods, racial murder in Mississippi, the assassination of the Rosenbergs, the systematic harassment and persecution of the Left?

Whatever the motives, the facts are clear. Motives and other subtleties

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don't much interest Mitford. Nor is she made uneasy by the Party's highly selective concern for civil rights and liberties—its indifference, if not actual glee, for example, in the fact of the FBI's brushfire war against Trotskyites and other elements of Left opposition, the "other" Left and therefore no concern of the Party's. As to the Moscow trials and inner-Party events in Eastern Europe, not a word, not so much as a glancing word. Dismayingly, the world beyond Party politics in an area of Oakland is quite rigorously excluded, as if history itself were someone else's business, perhaps the Party's Central Committee and that of its theoreticians, not that of a mere member and petty functionary whose principal business was raising money for the Party and the CTC. The dissociation of daily work from its rationale and justification is complete.

The "fascination, difficulties, and frequent joys of being an 'activist' ": "activism" is a curious condition, a queer state of mind. For the true activist, activity is its own reward and own end: being an activist is sufficient unto itself; it deals in means. Preoccupied with immediate and unremitting pressures—the domestic slavery of politics, so to speak—it cannot look beyond it, and has no wish to. Not for it to reason why; it doesn't raise questions, certainly not fundamental ones. Questions might lead to other questions and enough of them of the right kind might lead to disaffection . . . or to punishment. Punishment in the Party, at its most extreme (gothic horror-tales and bloody melodrama to the contrary notwithstanding), meant expulsion, banishment to darkest night, the world beyond the circle of radiant light wherein dwelt the Party. Expulsion meant, Mitford reports without irony, being "put on nonassociation"—"severed forever," in her words, "not only from the organization and all its activities, but from a whole circle of long-time friends and acquaintances." And what of her husband: "Would he have followed me into the abode of the damned, or should we have had to get a divorce?" That hyperbolic flourish does nothing to conceal the seriousness of the question and the very real underlying anxiety; the abode of the damned was filled with defectors, doubters of the received truth, heretics and schismatics. Activism, narrowly defined, as it is here, is a special universe with its own atmosphere, which cannot support life, and its own law of gravity; a dark, airless, cramped space. When only means matter, and ends won't stand close scrutiny, it attracts and breeds bureaucrats, clerks, bookkeepers, stationmasters who are so intent on timetables they don't ask where the trains are going.

For all its gay chatter and accounts of good deeds well done, the memoir

reveals a moral and intellectual void. Mitford and her husband visited Hungary not long before the events of 1956 and for all they truly saw they might as well have stayed home. To Khrushchev's appalling disclosures to the remnants of the faithful—surely the most devastating event in the psychic as well as ideological life of the Party—her response is bewilderingly bland, flat, breezy, almost dismissive. No more but no less, either: Khrushchev said what the enemies of the Party from Trotsky to the social democrats had been saying all along—that the Revolution had been betrayed and corrupted, that the Soviet Union was a charnel-house, that the true believer's life was grounded in lies. To these momentous "revelations," Mitford remarks: "I did not share this anguish to any marked degree, perhaps because I had never been as thoroughly convinced as most comrades of Soviet infallibility." Later on, when even the blind could see that the groundswell, once the dust had settled, would leave everything pretty much in place, and only the FBI remained faithful to the Party, she left.

Not noticeably to feel anguish seems somehow pallid, a bit bloodless, in circumstances which should have summoned up anguish to a very marked degree—after all, her whole life had been called into question; and not to feel it because in some sense she'd known all that from the beginning is intellectually delinquent and morally execrable. Better to close the mind to the Soviet Union's "fallibility" (a weak word, on the whole) and get on with the job; better not to inquire too closely, or at all; certainly better not to express one's doubts and reservations. Anguish is painful and sensible people avoid pain; unexpressed doubts—consciousness repressed and girded round by powerful defenses—needn't get in the way of job-efficiency, while expressed doubts can call down chastisement, and if they are pressed, expulsion: the damnation of "non-association." The closed, autistic, self-confirming world of the Party shut out the light; and in any case one kept so busy being "active" there was no time for questions, no space for doubts. By not reading or "associating" with the "enemy" one was sealed off from the enemy's truth; could maintain intact, as it were, an impenetrable chastity. To those inside the hermetically-sealed chamber, the thunder of the Gulag being built block by block was inaudible until one day the chamber walls collapsed. To look back upon the fascinations, difficulties and joys of activism with a certain measure of pride and cheerful good humor is, within strict limits, refreshing; but a prevailing, virtually shadowless flippancy of tone is a desecration: a politics of the nursery carried far past the most tolerantly defined age of innocence.

SAUL MALOFF's *most recent book is* Heartland (*Scribner's*).

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WALLACE STEVENS, UNBLOOMED

EDWARD PROFFITT

Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate

HAROLD BLOOM

Cornell Univ. Press, $17.50

To begin in a mode congenial to Stevens, an anecdote (possibly apocryphal). When Stevens won the Pulitzer, the then president of Borden's, responding to a newspaper piece in which "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" was quoted, telegrammed Stevens: "I want to know one thing. Are you for or against ice cream?" Absurd, of course. Nevertheless, one finds oneself asking the same question vis-à-vis Bloom. For Bloom is as evasive as he holds Stevens to be. Indeed, it is not until page 315 (or page 350 for anyone who takes Bloom's odd advice in his "Preface" to read the last chapter first) that Bloom comes out with his position: "The poetry of earth is only one part of him; the Transcendental searcher is after all the more dominant part." In other words, though Bloom hedges by calling Stevens an "involuntary Transcendentalist" (p. 357) and saying that "full transcendence is not available to Stevens" (p. 365), his answer overall is that Stevens is against ice cream. And that is no wonder given Bloom's picture of Stevens—a heavyweight taking on just about the whole nineteenth century in a desperate struggle to prove his anteriority. Bloom's Stevens is the Nixon of poets: a poet compulsively seeking ever-renewed evidence of power through infinite psychological maneuverings and subterfuges. Which brings me to the central fault of Bloom's book: it is not one book but two.

Book one is a book intended to exemplify massively the theoretical concerns that Bloom has pursued in his recent prodigality (*The Anxiety of Influence, A Map of Misreading, Kabbalah and Criticism, Poetry and Repression,* and *Figures of Capable Imagination*). His fundamental attempt has been to combine psychology and rhetoric, or to find the meeting ground of Freud and Frye. The attempt is admirable, and one for which Bloom is superbly suited, for he is certainly a master rhetorician and he knows his Freud backwards and forwards. But curiously, to use Bloom's favorite word (it appears on almost every page of the present work), Bloom characteristically misses the point of psychoanalytic theory, that point being to arrive at a standard of psychic health. Missing the point, he finds nothing amiss in his view that the relation between a "strong" poet of one generation to that of an earlier generation is one of deep, fierce oedipal conflict.

> *The point is not that Stevens is happier in the more "realistic" mode of contiguities but that he belatedly realizes the authentic burden of Romantic metaphor, which is to "fail" so as to prepare a path for the restitutions of Romantic metaleptic reversal, the mode of transumption.*
>
> Wallace Stevens

Poetic influence, then, is not what it seems (nor is anything else), as Bloom says overtly in his essay on Coleridge in *Figures of Capable Imagination.* The strong poet deliberately, albeit unconsciously, misinterprets his predecessors so as to claim their territory for himself. The meaning of a poem, thus, is in the violence done to another poem. What Bloom overlooks is that in the sphere of family relationships itself oedipal fixation is not necessarily the rule. Men do come to terms with their fathers, and some even do so gently and with humor. Cannot poets do the same with respect to their less threatening metaphorical fathers? If not, the problem, surely, lies, as it perhaps did for Coleridge, in the sphere of ego development rather than in that of rhetoric. But neither in his book on Stevens nor, odder yet, in his essay on Coleridge does Bloom relate his ideas on the poetic-oedipal to ego development. If he did, of course, he would have to pronounce all poets helplessly and hopelessly neurotic. His strong poets, then, would all be weak men. But Bloom's poets seem to have no lives; they live in a world of words and do battle only with the abstractions of time and history.

As to Bloom's second book, which is on Stevens, what a fine book that could have been! For Bloom is a sympathetic reader of Stevens (much more so than Vendler, say), and he seems to remember every word that Stevens ever wrote. More, he is judicious throughout and his readings are usually apt and informative once the layers of theory have been cut away. But book one does not go well with book two. For one thing, the compounding of motives leads to a writing style that is all but unreadable—not just dense, but simply poor. Then, Bloom's theorizing fosters a depersonalization of Stevens that Stevens of all poets can least afford. Indeed, one wonders what moves Bloom (he says that he is moved almost as often as he observes how "curious" something is or that "—— is the most——in all of Stevens"—such mannerism should have been expunged). For his Stevens is a ghost of a man battling ghosts with the ghosts of words (etymologies). Stevens to begin with is a poet who can be terribly cold, which even the most sympathetic of readers must take account

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of. Bloom, however, does not. Rather, he compounds the coldness so that Stevens seems frozen to the core, icier than his own snow man.

Bloom's Stevens is also a poet totally self-deceived, a poet who repressed every motive Bloom considers important in his poetry. But that doesn't bother Bloom, who holds repression, as he does oedipal fixation, to be a sign not of neurosis but of vitality. So Bloom thinks nothing of contradicting at every point Stevens's own statements on his work, of using etymologies to subvert surface meanings, and of forcing Stevens into a mold that Stevens himself objected to vigorously. In short, having taken Stevens as his province, Bloom feels free to exercise a *droit de seigneur* whenever he chooses. But I am not being entirely fair to Bloom here. What he says about the relation of Stevens to Emerson and Whitman, both of whom did trouble Stevens, is of note. I object rather to Bloom's way of saying, a way that belittles Stevens and makes one wonder why he is worth reading in the first place.

Nor can I accept Bloom's belated emphasis. To Bloom, Stevens is, as I have suggested, a grudging transcendentalist struggling against his true fathers in order to usurp their priority. He is more a solipsist seeking a sense of his own power than a naturalist seeking authentically to affirm the course of things. Perhaps Stevens, a perspectivist, allows for such a reading. But my Stevens, like that of J. Hillis Miller (*Poets of Reality*), is quite another bird. I see Stevens not as an "involuntary Transcendentalist" but as a man struggling to overcome his own urge to the egotistical sublime. Emerson and Whitman made Stevens uneasy not because he wanted to be them, but because he wished to purge himself of their attraction. The true sublime as I feel it in Stevens is not the egotistical sublime of Whitmanesque will and power, but the anti-sublime (from the perspective of the egotistical sublime) of the acceptance of necessity, of celebrating the bloom on the plum in all its ephemerality, of effacing one's narcissism to the point of saying "yes" with conviction. Perhaps Stevens did not reach that point. But his struggle to do so, or his struggle against his own negations and desire for transcendence, is what to me is moving in him. In other words, I find that Stevens was, though often with much hesitation, for ice cream; it is on that ground, finally, that I would recommend Stevens and censure Bloom.

Redating the New Testament

JOHN A. T. ROBINSON

Westminster, $15.

JOHN L. McKENZIE

Bishop Robinson has proved to all satisfaction his ability to combine sound and methodical scholarship with original, imaginative and even exciting ventures in the world of theological thinking. *Redating the New Testament* shows no diminution in the scholarly virtues just enumerated. One has to wonder, however, whether even a scholar of R.'s dimensions and achievements can take on a hundred years' tradition of New Testament criticism and get away with it. To avoid misunderstanding let me say at once that I wish him luck.

R.'s central thesis can be put briefly: there is no clear allusion in the New Testament to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It is impossible that in twenty-seven books written by members of a dissident Jewish sect, most of them Jews, this catastrophe of Judaism should not be mentioned. Therefore the authors were unaware of the catastrophe. Therefore, by an easy corollary, they wrote before the event. Surely no one ever pushed the argument from silence so far. In fact for so many different authors and so many different works such a silence would in any other context be judged the result of a conspiracy; I may liken such a conspiracy to the conspiracy of Talmudic Judaism to treat Christianity as non-existent.

R.'s thesis is not dashed off. It is exposed in a book of 360 pages devoted to dating alone, only one of the questions of "general introduction," although R. cannot escape entirely the questions of authorship. A widely used work of general introduction, the English translation of Feine-Behm-Kümmel, runs to 384 pages without the bibliography. R. cites every major work of New Testament criticism for the last century and a large number of minor works. "Naturally," R. says, "if one presumes to challenge the scientific establishment in any field one must be prepared to substantiate one's case in some detail."

What might appear to be the most difficult step in R.'s thesis is really one of the easiest. There are very few New Testament texts which can be even adduced as allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and most of these are found in the "synoptic apocalypses" of Matthew and Luke. R. has no trouble in showing that these texts show no awareness of the event. He argues that the treatment of the temple and sacrifices in the epistle to the Hebrews could be written after 70 only if the author used conscious literary devices to conceal his knowledge of the end of temple, priesthood and liturgy—a catastrophe which would have strengthened his argument.

The argument from silence is the weakest of all historical arguments; but when the silence is total, it raises questions. R. points out that other early Christian literature which is certainly later than 70 shows a poignant awareness of what must have been a revolutionary development in both Judaism and Christianity. And it is not only extra-canonical literature that is important. R. takes up the question of why the book of Acts ends when it does and deals with what may be called the sophisms which are alleged to explain why a work which was written in 85 after Peter and Paul had died in a persecution of Roman Christians, Palestinian Judaism and Jewish Christianity had been annihilated, and the Roman empire had had its own internal revolution, should

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serenely end its narrative about 62. Of course if Acts was written in 62 or shortly thereafter, Mark, Matthew and Luke must be earlier. R. insists that advancing the dates does not change accepted conclusions about the relations of the Gospels to each other.

I believe R.'s position on Acts and the Gospels would be stronger if he were more critical—I should say skeptical—about the historical value of Acts 1-19. I have had questions about this for years, and I finally decided that it is futile to attempt to reconcile Acts with the epistles of Paul; that the Council of Jerusalem, like the Jerusalem community of goods, must be classified as Christian midrash; that Luke knew little about Palestine and Palestinian Judaism, and did not understand that little very well. R. thinks this is radical skepticism, and it may be; but I cannot see that it will keep anyone from accepting R's revised chronology.

On the "Johannine" literature R. establishes a very strong position, and I do not see how the conventional assumptions about the origin of this literature at the end of the first century can continue to stand. There has never been unanimous consent about the date of the Johannine material, and certainly the Qumran documents have reanimated the discussion. The Gospel of John shows too much knowledge of Palestine and Palestine Judaism before 70 to be credibly the memories of a man nearly a hundred years old, or of his literary heirs. The Palestine prior to 70 had ceased to exist a generation before the conventional date of the Gospel of John. Let me add for the pastoral epistles and the Catholic epistles that they offer no serious difficulty to R.'s thesis.

One who has been trained in Roman Catholic theology (old style) recognizes at once what he encounters in New Testament general introduction. He recognizes dogmatic tradition. Something is repeated so often for so long by so many important people that it is never questioned. Scholars support the dates for New Testament books by quoting each other. R. quotes an irreverent saying of Austin Farrer that the dates of New Testament books are held up like a party of drunks weaving their way home arm in arm. As long as they cling to each other, they can weave all over the street without encountering a solid obstacle. Now R. comes along like the child in the story of the emperor's new clothes. As I remember the story, no adult could afford to admit that he even heard the child.

I am curious to see whether my colleagues, open-minded as they are and as they believe themselves to be, will permit a most respected member of the lodge to buck the whole establishment. I do not mean that they must immediately run up the banner of "Before 70"; I mean that they ought to ask themselves whether the accepted chronology of the New Testament needs something it has never had, a serious reexamination by the body of scholarship. I am aware that most of my colleagues think they need all this time in which they can allow for the development of Christology, the development of ecclesiology and church order, the obscuration of the Jesus of history by the Christ of faith, and other dogmatic elements in New Testament study. R. remarks that one cannot set a timetable for the development of ideas. The development of the myth of John F. Kennedy took less time than R.'s scheme of dates allows for a developed Christology. I admit that there was a polished literary artifice at work on the Kennedy myth which we cannot find in the naive creators of the Christ of faith.

> *Each new student enters a field already marked out for him by datelines which modesty as well as sloth prompts him to accept, and having accepted, to preserve. The mere fact that "New Testament introduction" tends to occupy his earliest and most inexperienced years has a formative effect, for good or for ill, on all his subsequent work.*
>
> —Redating the New Testament

I have no hesitation in affirming that R. has posed for the world of New Testament scholarship the most radical question that the world has heard since the publication of Rudolf Bultmann's "Neues Testament und Mythologie" in 1941. R. is too well established as a scholar to be ignored; a lesser man might be dismissed as a nut. I regret, as I am sure R. must also, that there will be no response from one who never shunned debate, the late Norman Perrin.

The Public Burning

ROBERT COOVER

Viking, $12.95

CELIA BETSKY

The King is dead. Elvis Presley has died, so we are more nostalgic than ever for the 1950s. *American Graffiti* and *Happy Days* were the beginning of a longing for that yesteryear, and now people in their mid-twenties sit around at dinner parties doing misty-eyed imitations of Wolfman Jack, while their younger brothers and sisters try to reinstitute bobby-socks and pointy bras, beer and be-bop. The complacent mood on college campuses is called "going back to the Fifties"; the Prom is big at Yale, bloody Mary Brunches pack them in at Harvard. It was a fun time, wasn't it, before America lost its innocence and everything got mean?

Robert Coover's *The Public Burning* blasts these images of the 1950s sky-high. He uses the Rosenberg "atom spy" trial as the basis for an indictment of American history, politics, American idioms and ways of life. His impression—or expressionistic chronicle—of the time is one of increasing stridency, mounting mass hysteria, and absolute paranoia. The all-American boys and home-town honeys of our fond memories become a collective, conformist consciousness screaming fire and brimstone, out for innocent blood, and more than a match for the spectral threat of "Communism" they are being incited to hate. They are

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prodded by a host of historical villains, actual figures pumped up by Coover to the size of caricatures, a far cry from E. L. Doctorow's anguished novelization of the same case, *The Book of Daniel*. Men like Judge Irving Kaufman, Attorney General Herbert Brownell, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Cecil B. DeMille, and J. Edgar Hoover are presented by Coover as organizing and orchestrating the public execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in Times Square. A major role is also played by "Uncle Sam," a mixture of Mike Fink, the Confidence Man, the Yankee Peddler, and other obnoxious, amusing braggarts from American folklore, who perpetuates himself through incarnations of our respective presidents. The other important figure and sometime protagonist is an awkward, insecure, megalomaniacal bumbler named Richard Milhous Nixon. There is no sign of the author in all of this; he conveys his outrage and his disgust by keeping his distance.

Coover's 534-page book covers only three days, but it ranges back and forth in time, into every nook and cranny of public and private events imaginable, and into every crevice of a variety of warped minds. Much of the story is told in a you-are-there Edward R. Murrow sort of present tense, but most of the world Coover describes seems not only chaotic and mad but stands on the opposite side from the Murrow who challenged Joe McCarthy. The Rosenbergs' guilt or innocence is immaterial in *The Public Burning* and they are not really the center of attention. Coover is more interested in putting an entire generation, era, and system on trial. His book condemns the accusers and along with them an American tradition of persecution from the Salem witch-hunts to Sacco and Vanzetti. His tactics are underlined and given force by a sense of the ludicrous. The fact that the charges against the Rosenbergs may be a gigantic mistake, one big communal delusion is sacrificed for the sake of public exorcism, an attempt to pacify fears and wrongs in a cowardly new world. Fascists are made, not born. Contrasting the Rosenbergs with their enemies, Coover sets up a comparison between competing causes, self-deluded altruism and the lust for power. What Nixon calls his "ordeals" or "crises" are his efforts to not succumb to weakness when a show of force seems—as always—more politic.

This is not the only antithesis Coover establishes: *The Public Burning* is a studied attempt at a kind of dialectical fiction, a conscious aping of schizophrenias handed down from the likes of Hawthorne and Melville. His world is divided along Manichean lines into the "Powers of Light" and those of darkness; Uncle Sam battles a "Phantom" variously identified with sin, sex, and international Communism. Coover's simplistic dichotomies are tongue-in-cheek and seem to play off the complex ambiguities that motivated Melville's *Moby Dick* or paralyzed his *Pierre*. Nixon says, "Paradox was the one thing I hated more than psychiatrists and lady journalists." Coover exposes the danger and stupidity of this dislike by showing how ambivalence, double-talk, superstition and suspicion create an atmosphere of doubt that can only be dispelled by destructive lies.

Coover's central opposition is between spectacle and audience, watching and performing, sincerity and falseness, publicness and anonymity. His characters' every gesture is permeated by theatricality: the Rosenbergs, too, in their letters, public displays of affection, their need to establish themselves as martyrs, become press agents of their own. Part vaudeville and part Greek tragedy, the novel seems constructed not in scenes but in front of stage settings. No place is real, actions resemble cut-outs, actual events are treated with an air of unreality. Coover has a lot in common with Nathanael West's "comic strip" technique. In his cityscape, signs, slogans, billboards, and picket signs scream out messages with all the aggressiveness of propaganda. The media are no better. Coover cleverly personifies *The New York Times* and *Time* as publicity mongers, who help throw up smokescreens to cover the duplicity of the causes they sup-

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port and help sustain a society that understands only commercialization, merchandizing and PR.

As in his first novel, *The Origin of the Brunists*, Coover is aware of the relationship between religious ritual and mass emotion fanned by fanatical hype. His *auto-da-fe* pays homage to the American cult of competition, the belief that there is always an "other side" that is bad and must be liquidated. Dick Nixon dubs this "gamesmanship." It is another play of opposites, and along with the author he tries to get a grasp on the ground-rules by looking for patterns in everything. He is convinced that "form" is the answer. His problem, however, is that he is too human, one of the wonders of Coover's book. It is amazing to encounter Nixon as an "I," not as the monstrous, plastic, bad guy Tricky Dick of Watergate fame. Disgusting, pathetic, unattractive, tactless, humorless, and dumb, he is still a person. With his eye for revealing trivia and obscure facts, Coover sets a man like Nixon (or the Rosenbergs with whom Nixon apparently has much in common) against a panoramic backdrop of psychological and historical absurdities, so that it becomes suggestively unclear whether a sense of hallucination is theirs or ours.

In *The Public Burning*, patterns, myths, symbols, and folklore are Coover's stock-in-trade and they make it a peculiarly *American* book. Coover manipulates them consciously and confidently, seeming to stand outside a tradition, yet looking in on himself as a part of it. All the essential ingredients are there and brilliantly handled: the American language, largeness, bravado, false nostalgia, trust in a Providential Design which cushions the American mind like one of our outsize cars. Similarly, the novel is epic-length, but not an epic. Coover obsesses about three days in June, 1953 without ever becoming tedious. He engages in a stylistic tour-de-force, which, by tracing American speech and speechifying back to their roots, also gets to the heart of many matters.

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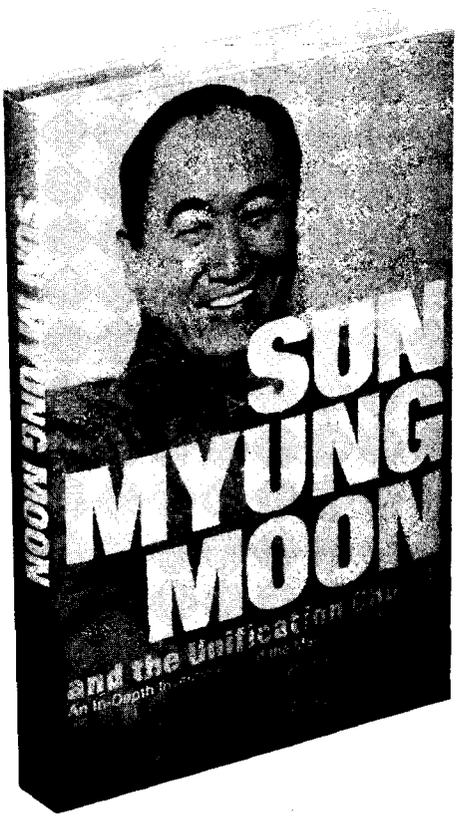

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Coover's vocabulary and his grammar are the clichés, jingles, and themesongs of this culture brought together and transformed into a unique, captivating jargon. He is not the Yankee peddler, but the Yankee tinkerer, an inventor of new forms patched together from existing ones. He gets behind and beyond history, his fictionalization of it most resembling the ingenuity of a Robert Wilson production. It, too, requires a marathon mentality to stay with it. It is worth the effort, however, and Coover's method is no more outrageous than that of insipid soap operas like "Washington Behind Closed Doors" and other television distortions. Shifting around from viewpoint to viewpoint, from one style to another, *The Public Burning* is a marvel of skill—and bad taste. Coover uses bad taste to make his points, to illuminate a society equally hideous, in the way of the "*poshlost*" beloved by Gogol. Through the kitsch and the obscenities, the fantastic prose and the word-games, echoes the message used by John Dos Passos to describe the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti: "We stand defeated America."

Poems of the Two Worlds

FREDERICK MORGAN

U. of Illinois Press, $7.95, paper, $3.95

SAMUEL HAZO

Before he published *A Book of Change* in 1972, Frederick Morgan was known primarily as a perceptive, innovative editor of one of the most distinguished quarterlies (*The Hudson Review*) in the United States. After the appearance of *A Book of Change*, which was an NBA finalist in 1973, Morgan was established as a poet of the first order. Now with the publication of *Poems of the Two Worlds*, many of the green shoots that were just beginning to show in his first book have become branches, put forth leaves, blossomed.

Morgan is a poet who possesses what Donne and his contemporaries called "sensibility." In short, he has an integrated view of things. In contrast with many other practicing poets who personify a "disassociation of sensibility" (Eliot's phrase), this is no small virtue. Look at the alternatives: poets whose sense of ease with words is mistaken for the casual perfection of art when actually it is nothing but a true reflection of their own superficiality, poets of pseudo-surrealism, free association, stream-of-consciousness and other symptoms of mere preciousness, poets to whom poetry is an exercise, a form of therapy, a time to versify, a rehearsal.

Sensibility is born when a poet with a worldview begins an ineluctable scrimmage with his own talent. This is what happens in Morgan's moving poem to his father (" 'When It Rained and Rained' ") as well as in an almost macabre poem called "The Door" in which the presence of evil (as in *The Turn of The Screw*) is present without being named: "The bombers didn't come. Alone with the moon/ I wandered those empty streets for hours/ and when at long last I found the surly warden/ there was really nothing at all that could be done./ The houses, the doors were all the same." The same sensibility is present in the cryptic poems that constitute the sixteen parts of "Exotica." Each of the imagistic sections has the cut of a swordpoint; for parallels, consult Archilochus, F. S. Flint or T. E. Hulme. And it cores the prose-poems of "Five Ballets" with a vision that makes me think of no less an achievement than Baudelaire's *Spleen*.

Sensibility is never complete without a spiritual, even a religious dimension. For Morgan it is almost elegaic, as in a poem to Allen Tate entitled "The Word": "Where Boreas comes hooting from the underworld/ he brings us news of those we may call heroes,/ persons we were, persons we're doomed to be/ each holding out to us a torch or chalice,/ watching us from a blackness touched with silver. . . ." And the same tone suffuses "Being I," "Being II," "The Devil Demands Perfection," the superb "May 1, 1974," "Mary" and "Prayer." Although Morgan in-

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vokes the theological rubrics of ancient Egypt, India and China, many of his dominant images come from Western Christianity but without the concomitant hang-ups. This Christianity, which is really derivative of Paul rather than Christ, has always had its problems with eros, thus creating the stupidity of puritanism on the one hand and the futility of sex divorced from personality (Margaret Mead's definition of obscenity, by the way) on the other. Morgan's answer is to accept eros as he accepts breath. The tribes of Paul might frown at this, but St. John of the Cross would understand as would Paula, Morgan's wife, to whom many of the poems are dedicated.

It is difficult to name favorites in a book like this (and it is, to its additional credit, a *book*, not a mere sweeping together of poems), but I would nominate among the shorter pieces "Forgotten Poem," "I Love Grim Autumn Days," "The Walk," "Hideyoshi" and "Bianca." In "The Step" I would have preferred if the line "Is it not a clinching thought?" had been left out; the poem is a beauty and really does not need it. "But Hill Poems" capture the peace and idyllic quiet of Maine. "Autobiographies" as a unit proves by its very existence to all confessional poets that poetry of the self can never remain private but must become personal to be poetry at all. Finally, the title poem has enough to reward all the attention it may be given and which it certainly deserves.

The worth of *Poems of the Two Worlds* will keep this book alive for years, I am sure. After all, poets who can *see* as well as *say* are not that numerous. And they cannot be dismissed once their poems are known. It's not a matter of cliques or schools or trendiness. It comes down to sensibility and language, as it always has. In this spirit, Morgan's final lines in his book are both the first and last say: "The poems, then, may hesitate/ almost as though unavailing/ against a presence that is so simply there/ and, finally, dissipate/ within the large contentment/ of knowing that their being has been known."

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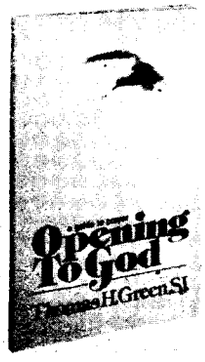

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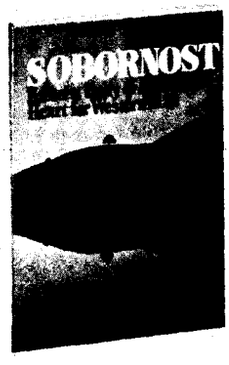

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ROBERT BOYLE

Bernard Bergonzi, in a pleasant, leisurely fashion, narrates the fairly placid development ("Earth hears no hurtle . . .") of the externals of Hopkins's life. He knows what there is to know, and he weaves that knowledge, for the first five of the six chapters of his "critical biography," into an interesting and informative account. With perceptive balance, he examines Hopkins's schooldays and experiences at Oxford, the long process of his conversion, his entrance into the Society of Jesus, his struggle with his priest-poet situation, and his final difficult years in Dublin. The book, beautifully written, judicious, perceptive in speculation, is a pleasure to read. It avoids psychoanalytic probing, and it merely points toward some of Hopkins's deepest interests, like his profound research into Scotus's thought. It aims to provide "the general reader" with "a more up-to-date account of Hopkins's life and his literary and intellectual development," and it does that.

In its final chapter, where criticism becomes central, that easy-going surface treatment is less satisfying. Bergonzi follows Bridges and Miss Schneider into those complacent categories that provide certitude about what kind of a vehicle language actually is. Assured limits, based on universal rules, give a solid basis for absolute criticism. Thus Bergonzi can approvingly quote Schneider's disapproval of Hopkins's "wilfully attempting to make language into a vehicle that it was not" (p. 168). He follows her also in condemning the ranked possessives in the *Deutschland*'s final line, calling it "hardly English" (p. 163). He wants to mean, apparently, that the line does not fit into that abstract English language (existing where? in the mind of God?) that "competent readers" intuit. What he does actually mean, as I see it, is that he is not prepared to respond to Hopkins's English. Too bad, in such circumstances, that he presumes to judge the line bad, and bad not only for him, but, according to some universal law, bad for all competent readers.

But fortunately he doesn't make much depend on such judgments. His chapter can serve, as he perhaps mainly aims, to rouse interest in a deeper look at Hopkins's poems. But while his lack of response to Hopkins's remarkable Scotistic insights and his ignoring of the overwhelming impact of the *Spiritual Exercises* on Hopkins's imagination do not injure his pleasantly relaxed biography, they do leave his criticism limp and bloodless.

That critical lack is abundantly filled in Father Milward's critical essays, sometimes brilliant, sometimes deeply moving, sometimes helpful merely, a time or two deficient and misleading—but always interesting and alive with perceptive, knowledgeable, sensitive response. Father Milward can follow Hopkins's Scotist probings, and does. Further, he analyzes without pedantry Hopkins's linguistic achievements, the careful structuring of sound, and the literary influences at work in Hopkins's text. Especially out of his own remarkable grasp of Shakespeare, Milward can respond to and explicate hundreds of delicate echoes in the poems. Best of all, for me, were his extraordinarily lovely essays on Hopkins's nature poems—the essay on "Spring and Fall" would make the whole book invaluable, even if all else were trash.

Sometimes he neglects even necessary points, as in his essay on "God's Grandeur," where he fails to develop the structural connections between the mysterious energy of electricity and the Spirit's divine energy in the sacraments ("flame," "oil"). That climactic brooding he might also have seen—as Joyce does on the opening page of *Ulysses*—as analogous to the Power

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which, descending upon Mary, conceived the Word. Again, in dealing with "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves," the thirteenth line of the poem is misprinted ("or a rack" instead of "of a rack"); the verb "waste" in the fourth line, perfectly expressing the act of the two kinds of light, he dogmatically categorizes as an "epithet"; and he sees the overwhelming power of the hellish ending as a moral preachment instead of the stark expression of present experience. These things can be argued, of course, but to my taste there is here and there a trifle too much of that "neck-cloth" which Hopkins found oppressive in Wordsworth's sonnets—e.g., perverse pious expressions like "to deprive God of the glory that belongs to him alone" (p. 92), and the embarrassing canonization of Hopkins, cranky little Englishman that he was, in the final paragraphs. Even if one had a solid basis (and Rome has not even stirred!), a book of criticism seems to me a poor place to subordinate poetry to sanctity.

But among so many superlative beauties these quibblings should serve mainly to highlight the excellence of these essays. As for the pictures, they are, most of them, well reproduced, and some of them do achieve Fr. Schoder's stated aim, ". . . showing the actual object or scene which Hopkins observed so sensitively"—e.g., the waxen hornlight of Welsh sunsets. But the lapses in taste—the garish prints of stilted finches, of a rose-moled trout; a view of fields from an airplane; poor pictures of mid-west American trees and sky; the ancient stuffed kestrel; the placid expanse of the very water where the Deutschland got stuck (one looks for a companion picture of the very air where the Windhover hovered)—do a good deal, in my case, to mitigate that "wonder" which Fr. Schoder says his pictures produce. Further, I am suspicious about his "Portrait of a brother and sister." Milward says (p. 92) that Hopkins saw "the portrait" at Monasterevan, but he does not say that the portrait here reproduced is the one Hopkins saw. This portrait is a gooey painting; Gardner judges, on the basis of "fine, fingering beams . . . do feature down," that Hopkins's text indicates a photograph (*Study*, I, 190). Did the painting we see reproduced here emerge from some back parlor in Chicago (or Jesuit house at West Baden)?

But on the whole one must judge

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

REVIEWERS

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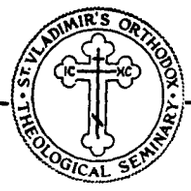

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MARTIN TURNELL

"I shall believe that the Germans are civilized when they stop admiring Kleist." The speaker was a Cambridge University lecturer in German who many years ago introduced me to the works of Heinrich von Kleist. He is one of the greatest German dramatists, but the Cambridge don's conservative pronouncement is an indication that he has been, and in some respects still is, a decidedly controversial figure. Very little has been written about him in England and America. I do not recall a production of any of his plays in England either by a visiting German company or in English. The translations of his plays in English are few in number and have been mainly produced in America. The controversies have not been confined to England and America. Kleist divided his own contemporaries and was severely criticized by Goethe. Only two of his plays, *The Broken Pitcher* and *The Kaetchen of Heilbronn*, were performed in his own lifetime. The result is that he has only been appreciated to the full in his own country during the present century.

It must be said at once that in spite of his greatness, he was a highly neurotic character and that his problems were made worse by the study of Kant's philosophy. Robert Helbling observes that "Although he felt favorably inclined towards Catholic liturgy and art in later years, he always remained at an inner distance from any organized religion, even that of his own Protestant upbringing. Dogma and ceremonials could no more help him in his own quest for selfhood than a philosophic system."

It is an even more important statement than the critic realizes. In spite of that last sentence, I am convinced that if Kleist had been or become a Catholic, his career would have lasted much longer and would almost certainly have led to greater achievements in the manner of Spain's three greatest Catholic dramatists. Unfortunately his neuroticism brought him down. He was born in 1777, but in 1811 at the age of thirty-four he died in a suicide pact, shooting a woman whom he hardly knew and then himself.

Kleist wrote eight plays, all of them in verse except for a mixture of verse and prose in *The Kaetchen of Heilbronn*, an admirable volume of short stories, a few essays and an absorbing correspondence. His greatest play is *The Prince of Homburg* which was completed the year before his suicide, but not published until ten years after his death. *Penthesilea* is the runner-up. *The Broken Pitcher* is an excellent comedy and *Amphitryon* is felt by many critics to be superior to Molière's comedy on which it was based, but it is so remarkable that, as Mr. Helbling tells us, it has been "variously called a comedy, a tragedy, a tragic-comedy, a metaphysical mystery, a heterogeneous product of tragic and comic elements, and the like."

These differences of interpretation of a single work are an indication of both the originality and complexity of his most important achievements. "Similar to the dramatic characters he created," writes Mr. Helbling, "Kleist himself was grasping for inner certainties and expressed his insight only in a tentative way, while always remaining a partial mystery to himself." His own abnormal character is apparent in plays like *Penthesilea* and in parts of *Die Hermannesschlacht* (known in English as *The Battle of Arminius*) which has never been translated in full. He analyzes the abnormal states of mind with a certain degree of complacency, but they end in sadistic riots and no attempt is made to integrate his findings. In

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The Prince of Homburg, however, there is an important change. His main concern is with the moral problem and its solution. It is generally assumed that it reflected the moral evolution of the writer, but unhappily it was short-lived. The play ends with the acquittal of Prince Friedrich from his condemnation to execution and his union with Nathalie, while the dramatist's life, as we have seen, ended with precisely the opposite form of union. It remains to add that this change, which did nothing to save Kleist, emphasizes what I have said already about his attitude towards religion.

Mr. Helbling shows that though the short stories were written at different times from the plays, most of them can be clearly related to Kleist's dramatic work. In spite of their violence, however, they are more objective in the sense that the narrator never intervenes personally with comments or analysis in order to deepen the significance of what is being presented. All the stories deserve reading in spite of their poor reception during the writer's lifetime. Among the most impressive are "The Marquise of O—," "Michael Kohlas" and "The Earthquake in Chile."

"The Marquise of O—" is of special interest because of Eric Rohmer's splendid film of it which has recently been shown in public cinemas and on television. It reminds us that in his critical writings Eisenstein insisted on the relations between the film and the novel, arguing convincingly that "montage" played an important part in both of them. Ingmar Bergman has taken the opposite view, has recently declared that "film has nothing to do with literature" and that "we should avoid making films out of books." Rohmer's film of "The Marquise of O—" is a clear proof that Eisenstein was right and Bergman wrong. The success of the film is the result not only of Rohmer's genius, but partly because he has made skilful use of dialogue in most of his films and partly because the choice of a long-short story avoids the insoluble problems which arise from filming very long novels, reminding us that the failure of two films of *Madame Bovary* (described by Eisenstein as one of the most cinematic of novels) by Jean Renoir and Gerhard Lamprecht was largely the result of the novel's great length.

Mr. Helbling's study is an excellent introduction to Kleist. It is to be recommended particularly strongly for anyone who is already interested in Kleist or who intends to take him up.

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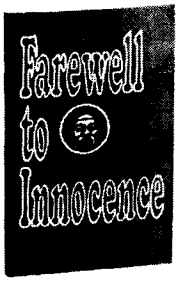

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of the continuing eruption of God into history implies that persons on the one hand "expect everything from God and rest all their hopes in him" and on the other, will to respond by "a qualitative change in one's system of values and mode of life." For the community "the adequate response can be nothing less than the restructuring of the entire social and cultural system." Yet the disciple of Jesus who is committed to such a restructuring must be prepared, in Kappen's view, to face death. For he finds the teaching of Jesus on nonviolence as valid as ever when it concerns violence against persons. It is structural change to offer liberation from a destructive social system that Kappen seeks.

Jesus and Freedom does not offer a finished model for renewal of society and church in India but a vision and methodology which will benefit the reflections of other Christians involved in social justice.

ELIZABETH CARROLL

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Abigail McCarthy (con't)

who would say that. I don't know, but I don't think so.

Writers from Ross McDonald to Joan Didion have documented what they see as the meaningless and empty life of California, the sad conclusion of the American experience, the journey west. But the Northwest terminus of that journey remains largely unchronicled. It is literally a new land still. The shining peaks of the Cascades were only lately active volcanoes; it was only 14,000 years ago that the glaciers retreated—the land does not bear the age-old mark of man. Even the Indian legends do not appeal to great antiquity. The wheat lands of eastern Washington state differ from the wheat lands of the Midwest, even of Montana, for wheat grown on lava soil seems to have a different color. The farmsteads, too, have the look of this century; the shape of the 1920s bungalow predominates.

The history of man there has a practical, sensible quality. It is there in the cosmology of the Indian making peace with the great beasts with whom he shared the land. It is there in the story of the first Spanish discoverer who yielded the territory peacefully to an English explorer, having decided that it was too far from home to defend. It is there in the border established without armed struggle. It is there in the invitation of the Indians to the white man's missionary to share the God who gave the white men a seemingly superior knowledge. (That that ended badly was not the result of the Indian decision!) It is there in people aware that their origins may be varied and elsewhere but that they share the now with other newcomers.

Of course, they of the Northwest share our history of exploitation, rapine, violence and despoil, too—but that civilized quality is real. Aboard the *Princess Marguerite* it seemed to me that problems *can* be solved, people *can* start afresh, and that humanity might make it after all.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 677)

Another case in point would be the French Catholics, who are also a notably "skewed" subpopulation compared to the other Catholic ethnic groups—Polish, Irish, Italian and German.

Secondly, among the inaccuracies in Marie Augusta Neal's review of *The American Catholic* is her assertion that Catholic church attendance began to decline in 1957. In 1964—the time of the first NORC study—72 percent of the American Catholics went to church every week. The decline from 72 percent to 52 percent happened entirely during the ensuing ten years. Catholic sociologists like Sister Marie Augusta, who dismiss our findings about the impact of *Humanae Vitae* on *a priori* grounds, ought, according to the canons of empirical social science, to detect

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frauds in our mathematical model instead of engaging in totally undocumented assertions about the impact of *Pacem in Terris* in the Third World and the Detroit Call to Action meeting. I will bet Sister Marie Augusta a Texas Instrument 700 data terminal that 90 percent of the American Catholic population never heard of *Pacem in Terris* or the Call to Action. In fact, the weight of the empirical evidence is that the majority of American Catholics reject the right of the Church to teach them both on sexual and social morality. This may be unchristian of them, but it is the empirical fact.

(REV.) ANDREW M. GREELEY
Director, Center for the Study of American Pluralism
National Opinion Research Center

Speaking Softly

Winamac, Ind.

To the Editors: I have been reading closely the article and letters dealing with the ordination of women [Sept. 2 and Sept. 16]. I certainly don't want to enter into that controversy but I do wish to comment on the responses by most Roman Catholics to Mr. Novak.

The responses almost unanimously convey arrogant contempt for Mr. Novak and his ideas. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Mr. Novak is not the point I wish to make. The point is that I can not recall one printed letter written by Roman Catholics, religious and lay, which did not take the posture of an ideological struggle rather than an attempt "to win the brother over." This is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that Mr. Novak admits he is not fully persuaded on the issue one way or the other. I wonder if this response more than anything else speaks to the truth of Mr. Novak's concern about the "power struggle" in the Church.

I am not a Roman Catholic, but I am a fellow Christian; and I can not but be dismayed by the apparent disregard for the person of a brother in Christ. As antiquated as his ideas may be (and I doubt that they are), at least he deserves far better from those who are united with him in love and service to our Lord Jesus Christ and one another.

RICHARD MILES
Pastor, St. Luke's Lutheran Church

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Election Echoes

Yonkers, N.Y.

To the Editors: Desmond Fisher's "Upset at the Polls" has a contradiction regarding the defeated coalition parties [Aug. 19]. He states that they gave us a glimpse of J.F.K.'s "what you could do for your country." He further states that there was a "fascist-like trend." The latter is the TRUTH.

J.F.K. would never sell out any part of his partitioned country anymore than Lincoln did. Cosgrave's coalition collaborated to the extent of saying that partitioned Ulster was part of England. Fianna Fail had on its election promises that the six occupied counties remained part of Ireland under the Irish Constitution and called for evacuation of the area by Britain. Mr. Lynch, however, is not a great leader; he might yet become such if he courts world opinion for a reunited Ireland.

As to the tough "law & order policy" against the I.R.A., this is like a chapter out of "Animal Farm," for the same was written of DeValera, Collins, and Pearse in their time.

The saying, "the more things change, the more they remain the same," is very true in Ireland.

The English Primate, Cardinal Hume, and the Church of England have condemned British military policy in N.E. Ulster as the root cause of the violence. Let America hear more about these facts.

KENNETH TIERNEY
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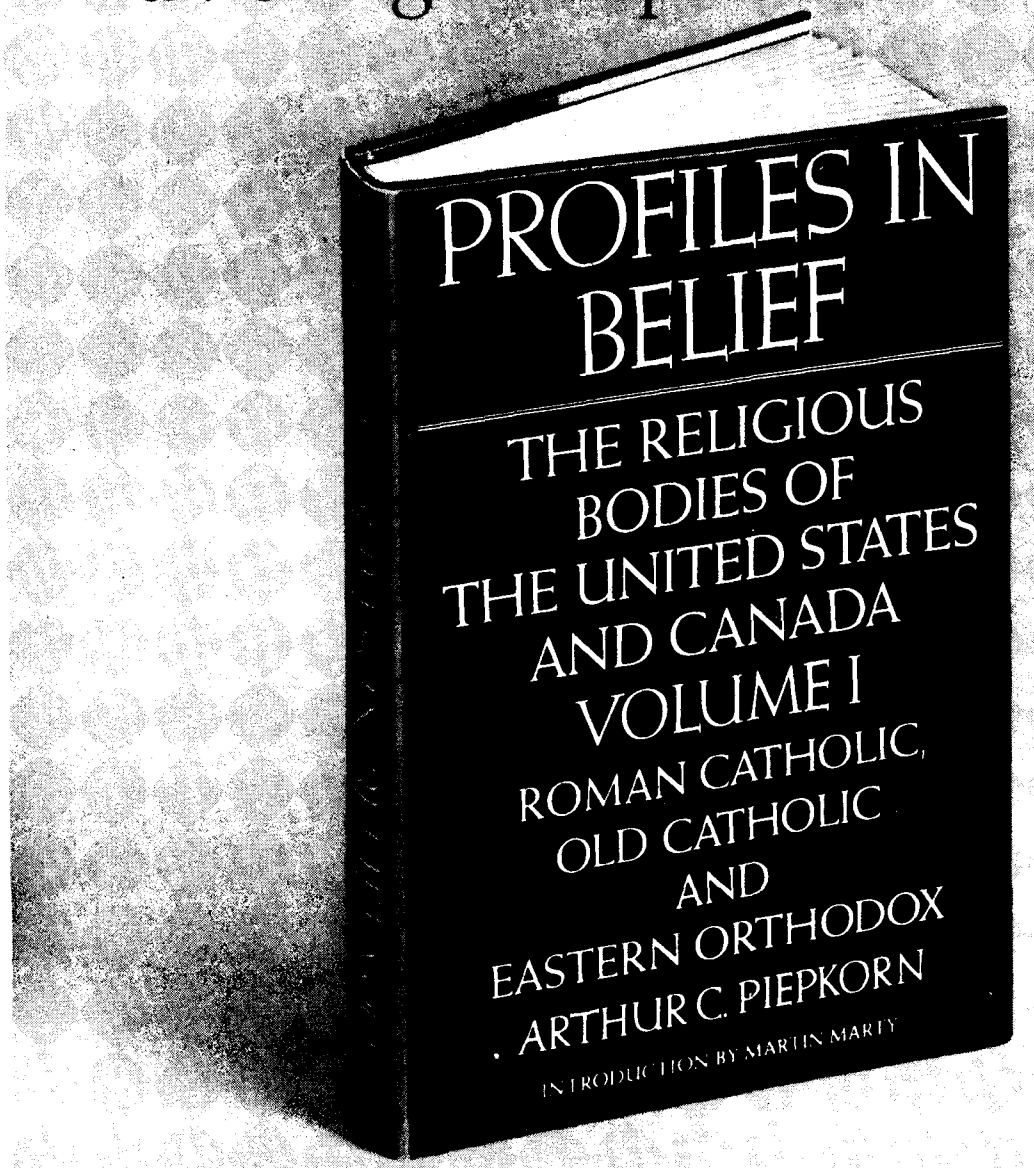
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